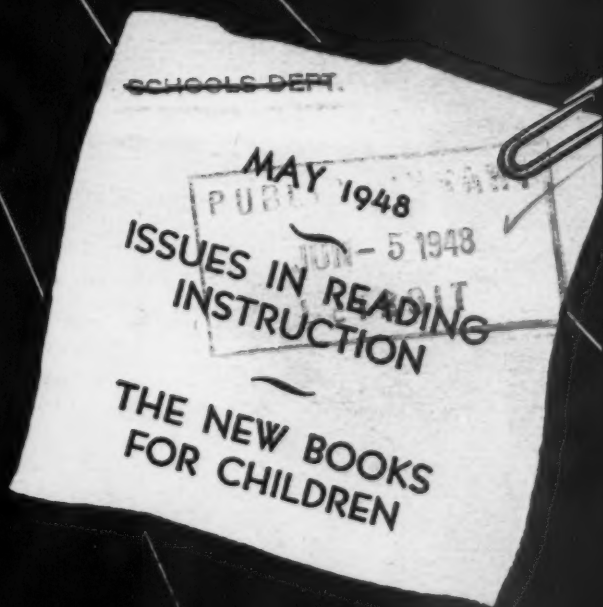


# *Elementary* **ENGLISH**



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# Elementary ENGLISH

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# ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

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## The Weekly Reading Program

ROBERT S. STEWART<sup>1</sup>

Any one who has worked directly with classroom teachers soon has come to appreciate the genuine difficulty even the most earnest teacher often faces in putting into practice educational theory.

Teachers are told, for example, at conferences and institutes, that grouping is an effective method of organizing a class for the teaching of reading. They are told why and they are told how many groups are optimal in a given situation. But, on returning to their 35 or even 50 children, they are frequently at a loss how to effect such organization.

These teachers ask in all sincerity: How can we "hear" all the children every day? How can we "hear" the children read and at the same time include other desirable reading activities? How can we keep the children who are at their seats and not with us in a reading group busy? These teachers do not mean what "busy work" can we give the children who are at their seats. Rather they are eager to know how to provide meaningful learning activities for them.

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor of Education, San Francisco State College, San Francisco 2, California.

In an attempt to answer this need for aid in organization the author devised the typical weekly reading program which is presented below.\* The program presumes a daily reading time allotment of 50 minutes and a class enrollment of almost any size. The class is divided into the usual three groups—fast, average, and slow. The plan is applicable to any grade above the second and with some ingenuity a teacher in the two lower grades might adapt it for use at those levels.

It should be emphasized that the program is not meant to be rigidly followed. It is to be considered instead as flexible. But it may provide the teacher who is having trouble with grouping with an organization that she may tentatively utilize.

The program is, of course, founded upon the assumption that desirable teaching of reading does not consist merely of the teacher "hearing" each child in a group read aloud every day. On the contrary, oral reading is limited to audience situations in which the child reads aloud a passage of interest to him and to his classmates—a passage that often is read as part of a review of a library book. While in some instances, oral reading may be from a basic reader, this type of reading experience is subordinate in the reading program. There may

### *Typical Weekly Reading Program for Grades 3-6*

(The daily reading time allotment is 50 minutes which is ordinarily divided into two 25 minute periods. This division is indicated by the dotted line. It should be noted that members of each group are encouraged to do free reading after completion of assigned work. This is particularly true for the low group. While only one period weekly is specifically set aside for this group to do library reading, their assignments should be limited in order that they may have some time daily for such reading.)

\*The program was originally devised for a group of emergency teachers with whom the author was working in the Fall of 1948. He is grateful to them for their aid in arriving at the form which the program has now taken.



**MONDAY****High Group**

Work at seats on assignment made Thursday and/or Friday. (See below)

**Average Group**

Work at seats on assignment made Friday. (See below)

**Low Group**

†Direct teacher instruction to whole group.

Free library reading.

Direct teacher instruction to whole group.

Work at seats on assignment just made.

**TUESDAY**

Direct teacher instruction to whole group.

Work at seats on assignment made Monday.

Free reading.

Work at seats on assignment just made.

Free reading.

Direct teacher instruction to whole group.

**WEDNESDAY**

Reading for information: special individual projects, current events, social studies, science, etc. reports.

Direct teacher instruction to whole group.

Work at seats on assignment made Tuesday.

Continue reading as described above. Committees may meet at this time. (These reports may be presented later this period or at social studies time, club meetings, language or similar periods.)

Work at seats on assignment just made.

Direct teacher instruction to whole group.

Cut second period to 15 minutes. Use last 10 minutes for *informal*, oral book reviews or for urgent reports prepared by the high group. (The whole class shares this activity.)

**THURSDAY****High Group**

Direct teacher instruction to whole group.

**Average Group**

Library reading and/or reading similar to that done by high group on Wednesday.

**Low Group**

Work at seats on assignment made Wednesday.

†See the accompanying article for a description of activities during this period. It is important for the teacher to use part of the time to motivate the assignment.

Free reading.

Individual study activities: vocabulary development for some; phonic drills; speed exercises; special remedial exercises, etc.

Direct teacher instruction to whole group.

Allow 10 minutes or so at the end of this period for all-class activity; e.g., development of skills in use of dictionaries, reference books; word study, games, etc. that can be of common benefit to the whole class; special reports; book reviews.

### FRIDAY

Individual study activities similar to those described for average group for Thursday.

Direct teacher instruction to whole group.

‡Work at seats on assignment made Thursday.

Utilize the entire second half of this period for whole-class activities centering around appreciation: audience reading, dramatizations, story telling, book reviews, etc.

‡While the low group has direct teacher instruction and assignments to complete almost daily, it should be remembered that these assignments are to be kept at a minimum so that this group will have opportunities for free reading and also reading for information similar to that of the average and high groups.

be days when there is none at all. The purposes of oral reading are, it will be remembered: diagnosis—for the teacher; the attainment of some skill in audience reading; and the sharing of a pleasurable or important reading experience with one's friends.

If the teacher accepts the premise that oral reading is not the dominant activity in a reading program, then the typical allotment of time presented here becomes feasible. The program, as a brief inspection will indicate, depends upon a great deal of silent reading, much of it teacher guided but not all of it requiring the immediate and intimate direction of the teacher.

In general, the program is conceived as consisting of two broad categories of activities. On the one hand, every day some of the children are receiving direct instruction from the

teacher. On the other hand, for at least a part of every day, all of the children are reading more or less independently.

The nature of the direct instruction obviously will vary with the needs of the reading group which receives it. On certain days, there may be much oral reading for diagnostic purposes. On the same day, but in another group, the instruction may be devoted to increasing skill in one type of comprehension. The possible activities indeed are as varied as the component reading skills.

The other broad category includes those reading activities of the children which can be carried on without the teacher's immediate supervision. They are often specifically assigned activities, but they have been strongly motivated by the teacher. They must, of course, be activities with some purpose for the children—a purpose that can be immediately seen. The end-products of these activities may be a group discussion of the material read; the solution of a problem; a report for the reading group or the whole class; or simply the answering of a series of thought-provoking questions which will serve as a basis for group discussion.

The values of these independent activities are many. When the children are so engaged, the teacher is free to devote herself exclusively to the reading group with whom she is working. The children can read more intensively as well as more extensively than previously when their reading was limited to periods of direct teacher instruction. The program provides an opportunity for provision for individual interests and aptitudes. Lastly, the children are developing habits of independent study which are so necessary for successful academic adjustment.

It is important to emphasize again the necessity for flexibility in the utilization of this or any other program for the teaching of reading. In particular, it should be noted that

groups should never be constant. The most effective grouping is that which changes membership in groups when change is indicated.

Ideally grouping is based upon special needs or weaknesses as revealed by diagnostic measures. Hence, when instruction has resulted in the eradication of these weaknesses, regrouping is necessary. Furthermore, some children after a short period of intensive instruction no longer profit from that particular type of instruction and should be moved to another group where the instruction will benefit them more.

Often—because of limitations of equipment and means of measurement, lack of supervisory help, and inadequate training—teachers group not on the basis of needs suggested by diagnostic tests but simply on general achievement levels within the class. In such instances, the teacher should also be alert to signs that point to the need for change in the composition of her groups. One child, despite the score on an achievement test, may actually be able to function more adequately in a group other than the one in which he was first placed. Another child may be capable of (and may gain much both educationally and psychologically) being a member of not one but of two groups at the same time. A third child may suddenly spurt ahead and be able to handle the materials of a higher group. A fourth child—possibly because of personality disturbances that were unforeseen or because of ill health—may need to work for a time with a slower group where success is easier and security is greater.

In brief, the program suggested here is one which is a guide to the activities of a class in which grouping is attempted. It will be most useful if each teacher freely modifies it and adapts it to her own situation and personality.

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# Some Effects of Reading on Children

NILA BANTON SMITH<sup>1</sup>

For several years investigators have been probing into reading comprehension as a field of study. As a result we have abundant evidence that children do get meanings from printed symbols. Perhaps it is now in order to direct some inquiry into another fundamental aspect of meanings, that of exploring the possibilities of the effects which meanings gleaned through reading may have in changing children's thinking.

We have assumed throughout the years that reading *does* have effects on children and that these effects are varied in kind. The study reported in this article was undertaken for the purpose of obtaining some information in regard to these assumptions.

In preparation for the study some preliminary work was done with children in order to ascertain possibilities of obtaining information and to develop techniques. In carrying forward the study itself, each teacher asked her pupils if they remembered any book, story, poem, or article which had changed their thinking or attitudes in any way; if so, to write about it; if not, to get a book and do free reading or something else while the others wrote. No pressure was put on anyone to write. The work was done promptly and the papers of those who wrote were collected immediately in order that these first vivid-recall responses might suffer the minimum of influence from other factors. Five hundred two responses resulted from the inquiry, representing children in grades four through eight.

## *Changes in Attitudes*

The largest number of responses, 60.7 per cent of them, told of changes in attitudes which had taken place as a result of reading. An analysis of the content of the selections which were mentioned as having changed attitudes indicated that stories about people and a-

<sup>1</sup> Author and well-known authority in reading.

bout animals had this effect more often than any other type of content; 37.4 per cent of the attitude responses were concerned with people, and 33.3 per cent of them were concerned with animals.

In a few instances there was a combination of animal-human attitudes, for example, Cynthia, Grade 6, writes:

"The story of *The Blind Colt* impressed me very much. I never thought that blind animals could get around or play tricks. I thought they should be killed. But now I know that with patience some blind animals can be taught to do the things they need in order to get along in life. They must have a companion though who is interested to help them.

"Animals are something like people.

"This summer when I was on a trip I saw a blind man playing a violin and traveling by himself and I thought of the little blind colt.

"Whenever I see a blind person again I'm going to act the same as if he wasn't blind. Instead of feeling sorry for him, I am going to admire him for his courage in learning to do things."

While the most of the changed attitudes toward people and animals were concerned with every-day benevolences, it is interesting to note that several children mentioned changes in racial attitudes. As an example of this type of change, we have the following expression from Elaine, Grade 6:

"The book *Silk and Satin Lane* has answered many questions for me. I have always wondered how the Chinese boys and girls were different from us. To me they seemed queer and I couldn't believe they have the same ambitions that we have. The real reason was that I have never been with Chinese children or read about them.

"This book gave me a better understanding of China, and I am sure that I have a different feeling toward the Chinese. I hope someday to be able to meet some Chinese children."

Other children wrote of changed feelings toward Indians, Mexicans, and Eskimoes. Roger, Grade 8, gives this account:

"I had always heard that Sitting Bull was a terrible Indian and that he was always killing people. Then I read the Book *Sitting Bull*. It told how he had held back from fighting as long as he could but at last he had to fight and when he did he was a terror. After he made a treaty someone accused him of trying to start a war and he was killed in a cowardly way.

"I learned that Indians have honor and are not all savages and I have a respect for them that I didn't have before."

Several children wrote of improvements in their attitudes toward Negroes. Peggy, Grade 6, tells of such an experience:

"Although I didn't like to admit it, I thought the white people were better than the Negroes. But I changed my mind after reading *Call me Charlie*. This was a story of a Negro boy who came to a new community. There were no Negroes in that town and so Charlie had to make friends with the other boys which was not easy since most of those boys felt just as I had. Charlie proved himself a good citizen and a good friend.

"I think now that I would play with Charlie if he came to my town. The color of the skin makes no difference.

"God looketh on the heart and so should we."

Changes in attitudes toward work and vocations were mentioned with the next highest frequency; 16.2 per cent of the attitude responses fell in this category. The account below is representative of this kind of response. It was written by Gloria, Grade 8:

"Before I read *Training for a Nurse* I always wanted to be a nurse. After reading this book I made up my mind, I didn't want to be a nurse. When reading all the kinds of work they have to do, I knew I just couldn't take it. So I decided to be a secretary."

Howard, Grade 5, writes:

"I have always wanted to be a gambler. And I always thought I could win a hundred million dollars. But one day my mother gave



me a detective magazine, and in the book there was a story about a gambler and how he would cheat other people. And at the end of the story he was shot through the head."

In a few cases (4.1 per cent of the total attitude responses) children mentioned increased patriotism resulting from reading.

Janice, Grade 7, in writing about "America For Me" says simply:

"This poem made me realize how nice it is to be an American."

Richard, Grade 8, writes:

"I didn't realize very much what my country meant to me or what it meant to other people until I read *The Man Without A Country*.

"When I read this I realized that I was lucky to live here in this free land and am thankful that I don't have to live on a boat."

Other children mentioned changes in attitudes toward different locales (4.0 per cent); toward sports (3.0 per cent); and toward historical changes (2.0 per cent). Space doesn't permit of examples of responses in these areas.

### ***Changes in Behavior***

A few of the responses, 9.2 per cent of the total, indicated changes in behavior resulting from reading. In these cases it would appear that attitudes were developed which were sufficiently strong to express themselves in action.

As an example of this type of response we present the account of Nancy, Grade 6:

"I never enjoyed a book more than *The Saturdays*. It was funny but it had a lot of sense in it, too, and made me think of some things.

"I have a little brother and I never liked to play with him. I felt that I was older and I couldn't enjoy what he did. This story showed me that different age children can enjoy playing together and that there is always room for the younger ones.

"I'm really ashamed of the way I acted toward my little brother. Now I'm more thoughtful and have more patience with him and play with him every once in awhile."

As in the case of attitudes, the most of the behavior responses were directed toward people (36.3 per cent); or animals (36.6 per cent). The balance of them were concerned with work, skills or hobbies.

As an illustration of the skill type of behavior response, we might read what Michael, Grade 4, has to say:

"I never used to draw boats. Then one day I read a book about boats. It was very interesting. On one page there was a picture of a big ship, and the story told about all the parts of the ship. I tried drawing the ship and showing all of these different parts that it told about it. It wasn't so hard. I like to draw ships so much now just about every time I draw its a ship."

Dick, Grade 8, tells how reading eventuated in handwork to express a hobby:

"I didn't know much of anything about airplanes until I read a book on airplanes. I found it interesting and I read more airplane books. Then I began getting books on how to make model airplanes and started making small models. Now I am making large scale models with motors in them. My father gave me a small room in the house for my workroom and there is where I am building all my models. I also have made myself a scrapbook on aviation and it is full of pictures of airplanes."

### *Changes in Concepts, Ideas, and Understandings*

Nearly one-third of the children who responded told of revised thinking which had come about because of having obtained information through reading. The per cent of the total number of responses which fall under this classification is 30.1. The information which

changed the thinking of these children had to do with topics in the following areas: social studies (transportation, industry, locale, institutions); sports; science; animals; people.

Modified thinking resulting from information gleaned while reading is obvious in such responses as those quoted below.

Skippy, Grade 8, relates this experience:

"What changed my mind about prisons was when I read the story 'Stone and Steel.' The book showed all the prisoners had when they were good. They have basket-ball team, a baseball team and play other sports. They have movies all the time and comfortable beds and some of there rooms have typewriters. Some have pets too. They get three good meals a day. This book certainly changed my mid about prisons that I used to think were dirty and uncomfortable and hardly any food."

George, Grade 7, says:

"I used to think that the record hight for a horse jumping was six feet two inches until I read the story of *Heatherbloom* and now I know the record is eight feet three inches."

Jerry, Grade 8, writes:

"I used to think that steeplchase racing was cruel, and that the jockeys whipped the horses. But since I've read *Troublemaker the Gallant* I know the horse enjoys the thrill of racing, despite the fact that he has got hurt in previous races. I changed my mind about steeplechase racing."

Ronny, Grade 4, tells us:

"I never knew that a guy could crack a cannon ball by freezing it in snow until I read the story Handy Snady in the book *Looking Forward*."

### ***Material Which Produced These Effects***

The reading matter mentioned by these children as having affected them ran the gamut from comics and cheap detective stories

through the Disney books, items from magazines and newspapers, textbooks, fiction of the better kinds, and poetry.

The books of fiction mentioned most frequently as having changed attitudes toward animals or people were: *Lassie Come Home*; *Smoky the Cow Horse*; *Silver, Dog of the North*; *Black Beauty*, *The Blind Colt*, *The Yearling*, *Trooper*, *Tom Sawyer*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Little Women*, *Heidi*, *Treasure Island*, and *The Bird's Christmas Carol*.

According to these responses, children's racial attitudes were changed by these books: (Negroes) *Call Me Charlie*, *Steppin And Family*, *Anthony*; (Chinese) *Silk and Satin Lane*; (Eskimoes) *Son of The Walrus King*; (Mexicans) *Pueblo's Travels*; (Indians) *Sitting Bull and American History*.

Increased patriotism was mentioned as a result of reading these selections: *America For Me*, *The Man Without A Country*, *For Love Of Country*, *The Man With Courage*, *Our America*.

An interesting fact revealed by this study was that, with one exception, no two children in any one room mentioned the same book as one that had changed their thinking or attitudes. The schools were in rather stable communities, and the most of the children in any one room probably had been exposed to the same books during their school experience. Yet, practically as many different titles were mentioned in any one room as there were children who responded. This is one indication, at least, that reading values *are* personal and individual; not all books affect all individuals in the same way.

### Conclusions

This study is subject to all of the fallacies which are inherent in the personal-response type of investigation. If, however, we wish to find out the effects of reading on individuals it would seem that our only recourse is to ask individuals to give us this information.

Judging from the responses of these particular children it would appear that reading content can effect mental changes, but that not

all children are affected in the same way by the same selection. In some of the cases changed thinking came as a result of information which corrected or clarified concepts, or yielded new concepts entirely; in other cases the change apparently took the form of modified attitudes; and in still other cases reading seemed to have resulted in changed behavior.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the following teachers for assistance in conducting this study: Lona E. Kenedy, Rivera, California; Clar B. Jackson, East St. Louis, Illinois; Florence Baldwin, Long Beach, California; Winifred J. Lynes, San Fernando, California; Helen Travernick, Berlin, Wisconsin; Florence Wagner, San Bernardino, California; Elsie R. Woodward, Santa Ana, California.

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# Should Children Read "Silently First"?

E. W. DOLCH<sup>1</sup>

*Elementary English is glad to present this viewpoint of a well-known specialist in reading, without, of course, necessarily endorsing it.—Editor.*

When one visits reading classes in primary grades, no matter in what part of the country, one hears the teacher say, "Read it silently first." When you ask why she gives this direction, she usually says that all the "authorities on reading" say that is the way to do it. And if you then ask her if it is a good thing to "read silently first," she will say that then the children can read better orally. She is probably correct. But is that a satisfactory answer?

It is true that if children first go over a section silently they will be able to read it better orally. If anyone, whether child or adult, wishes to make a good oral presentation, he had better go over the material silently first. In that way, he will know the thought that is to be presented. He will be prepared for the words that he is to say. He will have the phrasing in mind. He will be prepared to give some parts emphasis, and to pass lightly over other parts. This is exactly the way to prepare for any dramatic reading. It is the way to prepare for audience oral reading. But then one must ask himself, "Is this the way to conduct the reading of the daily lesson?"

The silent reading we have just described is needed for audience oral reading. But audience oral reading also demands that the child have rehearsed orally the piece he is to read. He should read aloud to himself or to a practice audience such as a member of the family. Then, in audience oral reading, only the reader should have the story before him. The others

<sup>1</sup>Professor of Education, University of Illinois

should have books closed, with eyes centered on the reader, ready to enjoy his presentation. Is the reading of the daily lesson audience oral reading? By any sound standards, obviously it is not.

Let us say at once that audience oral reading is a fine thing for all grades. First, it gives training in selection of a suitable story. Then it gives training in thoughtful preparation. It gives the class training in thoughtful listening. It gives practice to all in critical appreciation of literature. But let us not confuse the daily reading lesson with such carefully planned audience reading, which has its own distinctive purposes and methods.

Looking again at this common daily direction, "Read it silently first," we must ask ourselves, "What happens during this silent reading?" This is a question that no one seems to have considered. Teachers have told children to "read silently first" without ever questioning what they were going to do when so directed. To get the clearest possible picture, let us consider the four different things that they may do. That is, there are four different kinds of "silent reading" that may be practiced every day during the reading lesson when we say "read silently first." Which of these actually are practiced? Do we want them to be practiced?

1. *True-silent reading.* The ideal reading process implies that the eyes are swung rhythmically across the page and back again to the next line, the mind getting the thoughts as they are met with. True silent reading means that the child actually does his silent reading that way, swinging his eyes smoothly across the line, then back to the next line, smoothly across that line, back to the next, and so on. That is fine. If the children do this, they are doing just what they should be doing. We want them to have this kind of practice.

Common sense compels us to ask, however, how many of



the children in any class are really doing true silent reading when the teacher says, "Read silently first." Let us remember what reading tests tell us, that in each grade group there are five to seven grade levels of reading ability, and that even in the "upper half" or "lower half" of any grade group there are still three or more grades of reading ability. Undoubtedly the upper third of any reading class can do true silent reading. They know all the words. They recognize them all fluently. They have no difficulties. But these children are not the average. The average child of any grade finds some words he does not know at sight. The below-average reader finds many words he does not know fluently by sight. School books are built to be harder every successive school year, and every page is planned to have new words on it. So for most of the children, reading the usual material, true silent reading is just not possible. They just cannot do it. So they must do one of the other three things that are possible, and that we shall consider. (Anyway, if the children *can* read the passage fluently, doing true silent reading, why have them read it orally at all?)

2. *Puzzling.* Since most of the children will meet strange words in their silent reading, they may try to "puzzle them out." They may do this "puzzling" in many ways. (1) They may look back and forth, reading the other words over and over, trying to guess from context. (2) They may sound out the words by some system they have been taught or some system of their own. (3) The children may be uncertain of the thought and so read over and over, going back for the "running start" that is so common. (4) They may crawl along the line, looking at each word four or five times. They may do any or all of these tricks or a great many more. In fact, they are quite likely to do them. They are working silently, and no one has the slightest idea of what they are doing. If the teacher watched their eyes, she might get a clue, but she seldom watches them.

In short, the "puzzling method" of silent reading is very likely to be used every day by the children under the "read silently first" plan. And this puzzling method is a very bad thing indeed. It gives very short eye movements and hundreds of regressive movements. It shortens the eye span. In other words, it teaches bad eye movement habits. All of these habits will then carry over into all of the child's reading. These bad habits are the worst enemy of the *true silent reading* that we want the children to develop. When you say, "Read silently first," are you teaching your children to "puzzle" instead of to read?

3. *Miscalling*. A very good experiment for the teacher to try is to take her seat at the back of the room, as distant as possible from the children, have them "read silently first" and then come to her one by one and in a whisper read the passage orally. She should record for each child just how many of the words he reads confidently but *reads wrong*. The point is that the direction, "read silently first," does not ensure they will read it *right*. Only the good readers will read it right. The others will read somehow, and a good deal of the material they will read wrong. Is this a good thing?

Of course we may say, "We will read it orally later and thus correct the mistakes." Does this actually correct the mistakes? The child reading silently looks at "very" and calls it "every." He is probably making a mistake he has made often before. Or he tries to sound out "hate" and calls it "hat." He wonders at the idea "full of hat" but it looks like "hat" to him, and he says it over and over to himself as he reads silently. When he hears the oral reading, he may hear both of these words pronounced right. Does the right pronouncing by someone else wipe out the wrong pronouncing by himself? Perhaps. Perhaps not. Remember that the *first* impression was a wrong one.

4. *Skipping and Guessing*. Another result of "read silently

first" can be found if each child is checked as suggested above by whispering to the teacher. It will be found that many children just did not know certain words, and did not try to call them anything. They just left them out. Other words they called something just to fill out the sentences. They may have read "full of hurry" instead of "full of honey," just to have a word to fill the space. In other words, they did what we might call silent reading but what should be called what it really is, "skipping and guessing."

More and more teachers in middle grades and high school are discovering that their children have learned the skipping and guessing method in the primary grades. During most of the time assigned to reading, the children had been told to read silently. If there was oral reading afterwards, they were not called on, and they did not watch the text when the oral reading was done. When there was no oral reading, but only questions, they had got from the passage enough to answer the question, though they had read only half of it. This situation is easily noticed if you will ask children to read silently, ask them questions on the material, and then ask them to read it orally. Very often you will get perfectly correct answers from a child who later shows he cannot read the passage because he does not know half the words. But he can answer a question that itself suggests the answer and that can be answered by partial reading.

Is this skip-and-guess method good? It is good for reference reading, when the child goes to an encyclopaedia written for adults. It is good for much library reading and even recreation reading. But it is not good for a school textbook. No writer of a textbook designed it for the skip-and-guess method. He intended every word to be read. Every word has a meaning that the child should get. Every word should be part of the child's reading vocabulary. There is no place here for the skip-and-guess method. But we are teaching skip-and-guess,

especially when we say "Read silently first." That is, we are asking children to read silently material they cannot *read* silently. So they do the best they can.

We have pointed out that when we say "read silently first," any one of four different things may happen, *true silent reading*, *puzzling*, *miscalling*, and *skip-and-guess*. Only the first of these is good. Only the best readers can do this first thing. All the other children are forced to do one of the others. And all of the other things are bad. Do we ever realize what we are teaching when we say "read silently first"?

We can now go back to our first suggestion, that the probable reason for "read silently first" is that then the children make a better show in the oral reading. This is true. Is that the teacher's purpose, to make a better show in oral reading? If the parent is listening, perhaps it is. But at other times, why make a better show in oral reading? Look at what is happening to the children. What we are really getting is "*Bad silent reading for the sake of good oral reading?*" Does that sound like the purpose of our reading program?

There is another alternative, that is "*Less-good Oral reading for the sake of good silent reading.*" Oral reading without preparation, that is, sight oral reading, is bound to be rather poor. Let us call it "*first oral reading.*" But first oral reading can at least go straight forward, without puzzling and regressions, without skipping and guessing, and at reasonable speed. When the child hits an unknown word, the teacher can give the word immediately and let him read on, not swing his eyes back and forth. And the teacher always has the choice of calling on the good reader for the first oral reading. That reader will read the selection orally more smoothly and faster than the poor reader will ever read it silently. Then, if the teacher wishes, she can give a second oral reading to the poor reader who has been carefully watching the first oral reading.

Then his oral reading will be better than his silent reading alone could be. And after that, the teacher must call for *good silent reading*.

Good silent reading should always follow any oral reading. The children know the words now. They know the general thought. They can run their eyes right ahead over the material without hesitation. So now the teacher calls for answers to questions. She says, "Read the paragraph again and tell me why the dog did not go home?" She says, "Read the paragraph again and tell me which of the children was right in his idea." She says, "Read the paragraph again and tell me what house you have seen that is like the one in the story." If a child tries to answer at once from memory, she says, "I cannot call on you until you have read again." So again and again she has the children do true silent reading, running their eyes smoothly along the line, down to the next one, smoothly across that, and so on. That is what we want. And "oral reading first," is the only way we can get it *on the part of most of the children*.

So the problem comes back to our purpose in reading. That purpose is certainly not to use silent reading for the sake of oral. It should be to use oral for the sake of silent. And the method is to prepare the children for silent reading through oral reading, and then to give them *much practice in true silent reading*, which is our aim in the whole program.

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# How Moral Is Oral?

CONSTANCE McCULLOUGH<sup>1</sup>

A colleague of mine always puts a certain book by John Dewey on her bibliography without indicating the date of publication. "It's 1898," she explains sheepishly, "but people still don't know about it."

It is not surprising, then, perhaps, that one of the most devastating pieces of research in reading methods appeared eight years ago and has yet to be appreciably felt in terms of altered practice in the public schools of this country. Teachers don't know about it. Some supervisors don't know about it. And while it has affected the contents of every major book or manual on the teaching of reading since April 1940, when it appeared in the *Elementary School Journal* under the authorship of Luthur C. Gilbert, it has scarcely been felt in popular practice.

The Gilbert study showed that just about every teacher in the United States was a sinner. Almost all of us at one time or another had presided over oral - reading - around-the-room all the children looking at the same page in their books while one read aloud. It was a pleasant, seemingly innocuous performance. A roomful of brains, including ours, could be

held relatively in neutral while Johnny, in low gear, strained uphill over words that the author had planted for his special misery. To shift gears and metaphors, we might add that he could feel the hot breath of the pack upon him, waiting to pounce at his error. No one's attention was to be on the thought of the passage. Johnny's attention was on the words. The attention of the other children was on the fallibility of Johnny.

Born of the era in which reading was word-calling rather than a thinking experience, the practice has little place in a modern program that supports no separation of thought and mechanics. The Gilbert study corroborates this view by showing the detrimental effect which a diet of purposeless oral reading can produce.

Every teacher knows that in any so-called homogeneous group of children reading the same book, some read faster than others. She has to brace herself against calling on little Oswald for every answer, because his hand is up invariably first. She has to remind herself that little Petunia is still in the class, for she is the last

<sup>1</sup>A member of the faculty of San Francisco State College.



to finish everything, a flower that never blooms.

Gilbert set out to discover what actually happens to the eye movements of the Oswalds and the Petunias of a group while the Johnnys, the middlemen, read aloud. Petunia, who reads more slowly than Johnny, finds that Johnny is ahead of her by the end of the first line. She plays leap frog, as a reader, to keep up with him. It is easy to imagine the habit of careless, inaccurate reading in which Petunia can become rooted if, day after day, this experience is repeated. Oswald, meanwhile, finds himself at the end of the line while Johnny is still intoning the second or third word. An amiable child, Oswald returns to Johnny's position and starts out again, only to wind up ahead and retrace his steps. It is not hard to suppose what may happen to Oswald's reading after days of amiable regression. One suspects that the only child untouched by the hazards of this method is the person who loses the place. Historically his reward has been to remain with the teacher after school.

Assuming that inadvertently we have been committing a crime against the reading habits of youngsters, what are we going to do now that our chief sedative and time-consumer has been taken from us? Children like to read aloud. How shall we

explain to them and to their parents that whatever we do instead is better? These are the questions that we constantly ask and may well be the reasons for our reluctance to change. It is all very well to condemn one method. But what is the alternative?

Let it be said immediately that the alternative is not omission of oral reading. Johnny and Oswald and Petunia may all go home at night to report that they have, indeed, read aloud this day. Neither is the alternative anything startlingly new. We have all done the things that are going to be suggested. The change is not so much a disposal of antiques as it is a re-arrangement of the old furniture—but a re-arrangement such that the children do not maim themselves over the Chippendale legs. Best of all, in terms of the 40-year stint, the alternative is a guarantee against teacher-boredom. We may have to read from the same old book till the yellow leaves curl, but, instead of the inevitable and changeless drone around the room, the events from year to year will be as different as the children we teach.

They will be different because the oral reading will be related to the discussion of the silent reading, and the silent reading will have been purposed by thought-provoking questions into which the child must put



himself. Before the children read silently, the teacher will give them something to look for, something to think about as they read. Maybe they themselves will help decide what the purpose should be. "Why is this story called Soandso?" "Is it a good title?" "Why or why not?" "What are the people pictured on the first page getting ready to do?" Or perhaps the teacher will ask the children to read to find out the main idea.

If an important feature of the story is a sequence of steps in the solution of a problem, the teacher may say, "Read to find out what this boy's problem was and how he went about to solve it." Or character change may be prominent, and the teacher will say, "Read to find out how Soandso changed in this story. Be ready to tell how he was at first and how he was at last." Or perhaps the character may have had quite different feelings: "Read to see how Soandso felt at first and how he felt later. Be ready to tell why he changed." There may be two very different characters in the story, each having some good and bad qualities but each showing a distinct personality. "Be ready to prove Whosit and Whatsit were alike and different."

So, the purpose-setting will involve reading for the main idea, or reading for an important sequence, or read-

ing to make comparisons or draw conclusions, and the like. The children will read silently for the purpose and will prepare themselves, either by taking notes (page . . . , paragraph . . . , line . . . , key word . . . ) or by making mental notes, to prove that they are correct in their facts or soundly grounded in fact for their opinion.

The discussion after the silent reading will begin with the purpose. The children will offer their answers and, as each does and to the extent that the teacher wishes to engage in oral reading, each child will read proofs—short passages or sentences or phrases—from the book in defense of his opinion. As he reads, the other children will not be watching to trip him. Their books will be closed over trigger fingers, for their job is to listen to see whether the speaker's selection really does prove his point. The teacher, god-like, follows Johnny in her own book (Who cares what bad habits she develops in her declining years?) and evaluates his thought at the same time. Johnny reads his best, for he is selling the class his opinion. After the reading, the other children (not teacher) decide whether he has made a sale. Another child offers his opinion and proof, and so on.

But this will not account for the

whole period. How can everyone be given a chance to read aloud? The teacher has a few spare bullets in her belt. No slouch, she. So she sets a problem to the group: "How would you like to illustrate suchandsuch in this story? What would you have to have in your picture? Find the places that tell the things you would have to have." Or, "How would you like to dramatize this story? How many scenes would we have to have? Find in your book the places that show a change of scene." Or, "What part of the story is best for dramatization? Who would like to read the part of Soandso, etc?" Or, "The author has interesting ways of saying things. Find a place that you liked especially because of this." Or, "What words does the author use to make us see things vividly?" Columns of See, Hear, Feel, Smell, Taste, can be filled with words which stimulate these senses.

If the teacher's interest is paragraph structure, she may ask the children which sentence in a certain paragraph yields the main idea of that paragraph. A child will read his candidate while the other children listen to see whether it is their choice too, or better than their choice.

But what about all those new words in the story? Some of them, perhaps all of them, will be covered

in the oral reading, just as they used to be in the dully meticulous past. If some are not, honesty is still the best policy (after deceit hasn't worked). We may write phrases or sentences on the blackboard containing those words. We may write the words in isolation and ask for meanings and sentences. We may ask the children to skim to find sentences containing the new words we list on the blackboard. Or the children may quiz each other on the new words in a game of their own invention.

Notice that the emphasis in this procedure is just where it belongs—where the author intended it when he wrote the story—where the curriculum builders intended it when they proposed the teaching of reading. It is on the meaning of what is read. And notice that the skills are not in separate, devitalized compartments. They work for each other. The introduction of the story sets the purpose; the silent reading fulfills the purpose and prepares for the discussion; the discussion utilizes both silent and oral reading; and only the mixture of teacher and pupils determines where we go from there. For questions in the discussion may lead to independent research, use of dictionaries and reference books, the reading of related stories, the making of illustrative materials, and then the

# Some Recent Books for Children

IRENE GELTCH AND IRENE B. MELOY<sup>1</sup>

## *For the Primary Grades*

*About Peter Platypus.* Written and illustrated by Inez Hogan.. Dutton, \$1.00.

Delightful pictures in black and white with a slightly humorous cast show all the animals that the platypus met when he set out to discover how he was different from the rest. Children from three to six will enjoy the simple tale and will want to visit the platypusary in the zoo to see this little animal about whom they have learned so much. Large print and wide margins give a pleasing appearance to the square pages.

*The Children's Record Book.* By Harriot Buxton Barbour and Warren S. Freeman. Oliver Durrell, \$3.50.

An excellent and practical book showing how the child's appreciation and love of music can be built up, step by step, by the discriminating use of the phonograph and the radio and by family musical activity. The age groups considered are: birth to 4 years; the preschool child; grades 1 through 3; grades 4 through 6;

junior high school years and high school. Within each age group are lists of recommended records classified according to type such as program music, absolute music, stories and rhymes. Interesting biographical notes on the great masters of music and descriptive notes on musical forms are included. Musical activities suggested throughout the book are singing, the rhythm orchestra, musical home theatricals, and neighborhood orchestras.

*Fire Eye.* By Maj Lindman. Whitman, \$1.50.

A slight story for beginning readers about a small boy and his beloved colt. Winning a blue ribbon at the horse show makes a happy ending to a story where there are also a series of mild misfortunes. Fifteen full page illustrations in color add to the attractiveness.

*Fish in the Air.* By Kurt Wiese. Viking, \$2.00.

A Fish Kite and a Big Wind bring lively adventures to the small Chinese boy in this humorous picture book. The spirited drawings overflow with

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Hughes Room, Chicago Public Library.

the life and color of China and offer fascinating glimpses of town, countryside and people.

*Fix it, Please.* By Lucy Sprague Mitchell. Pictures by Eloise Wilkin. Simon and Schuster, \$.25 (Little Golden Book)

Delightful addition to the Little Golden Book series is this story that a second grader can read to the smaller boys and girls. It tells how Mother or Daddy fix the broken toys and how the doctor "fixes it" when the children become ill.

*Juanita.* By Leo Politi. Scribner, \$2.00.

Childlike and delicate is this beautiful picture book that tells how little Juanita celebrated her fourth birthday and how she and her white dove marched in the procession down Olvera Street on the Day of the Blessing of the Animals. Children will be fascinated with the colorful dress and customs of these little Mexican children in Los Angeles and will delight to learn the few simple Spanish words and the music which is included in the book.

*Kit Koala, the Shy Little Bear.* By Ninon. Rinehart, \$1.25.

Little children will have had an introduction to the plants and animals of Australia when they finish this sympathetic tale of the little

koala bear who was too shy to come out of his mother's pocket until a sudden danger gave him courage to do the right thing. A full page drawing of the animals in black and white or black and yellow accompanies each page of text. Interspersed in the text are drawings of plants and animals.

*The Little Farmer.* By Margaret Wise Brown. Pictures by Esphyr Slobodkina. William R. Scott, \$1.50.

A repetitive story about a summer's day in the lives of a great big farmer and a very little farmer serves to introduce the idea of relativity of size to preschool children. The double-spread illustrations are poster-like and colorful and the book has been laboratory tested.

*Mary Ann's First Picture.* Written and illustrated by Winifred Bromhall. Knopf, \$1.50.

A paint box furnished with bright colors was the present Mary Ann had dreamed of and she found it among the packages grouped around her plate on the morning of her seventh birthday. How she went to Mrs. Pennyfeather's little house for eggs and how she painted all that she saw there in her first picture is told in this delightful story which can be read by third graders. Younger children will enjoy hearing

the story and looking at the pictures. Illustrated in color and in black and white.

*Story-teller Poems.* By Rowena Bennett. Illustrated by Donald E. Cooke. Winston, \$2.00.

About 70 whimsical and appealing original poems which tell stories about a variety of subjects close to children's hearts.

*While Susie Sleeps.* By Nina Schneider. Pictures by Dagmar Wilson. William R. Scott, \$1.50.

Soft, pleasing pictures in black, grey and yellow combined with rhythmic text tell young children what is going on all over the countryside and in town while Susie sleeps. Little animals crawl and scurry about, bakers roll dough, trucks rumble along country roads, and milkmen fill bottles with fresh white milk for breakfast. Excellent bedtime picture book for the nursery school group.

*The Wind and Peter.* By Alvin Tresselt. Pictures by Garry MacKenzie. Oxford, \$1.00.

"Who has seen the wind?" All little children are interested in this mystery. They will be delighted with this story, told in charming, rhythmic prose, of Peter's experiences with the wind during the different seasons of the year. Delightful illustrations

that carry out the spirit of the story add to its enjoyment.

### *For the Middle Grades*

*An Angel in the Woods.* By Dorothy P. Lathrop. Macmillan, \$2.00.

A toy angel brings presents to all the little wood creatures on Christmas eve. Bare twigs, warmed by her candle flame, rustle with leaves and put forth acorns for the squirrels; drab winter vines burst into green leaves and provide red partridge berries for the mice; a little bush blossoms with waxen flowers and is crowded with blueberries for the chipmunks; the snow under the angel's feet melts and clover pushes up from the earth for the rabbit. A slight, lovely story permeated with the spirit of joyous giving and illustrated with Dorothy Lathrop's delicate and sympathetic drawings.

*Appleseed Farm.* By Emily Taft Douglas. Illustrated by Anne Vaughan. Abingdon - Cokesbury, \$1.50.

A simple but pleasing little story of a pioneer family in Indiana who was encouraged and cheered by Johnnie Appleseed and his gift of seeds. A spirit of brotherhood and loving-kindness runs through the story like a golden thread linking the little pioneer girl whose tenth birthday Johnnie Appleseed cele-

brated, with her granddaughter who gives jelly and apples from descendants of the original orchard to those who have no trees.

*The Bewitched Caverns.* By Leona Train Rienow. Illustrated by Allen Pope. Scribner, \$2.00.

Children who are interested in stories of prehistoric man will thrill to the adventures of this boy and girl of the Cro-Magnon period. Olo had not made the big kill that would entitle him "hunter" but after his bravery in exploring the huge subterranean cave and in the fight with the strange people who inhabited it, the tribe could do no less than give him the honor he deserved.

*The Big Wave.* By Pearl S. Buck. John Day, \$2.00.

"Life is stronger than Death. Be strong and brave" is the theme of this soul-satisfying story of two Japanese boys. A tidal wave washed away a fishing village carrying with it the family of a little boy who found refuge at the farm home of his friend. Under the kind ministrations of the farmer little by little the boy recovers from the numbness of the shock to feel once more that life is good and to form his own philosophy. Beautifully illustrated with reproductions of Japanese prints. A rather special book but one which is worth presenting es-

pecially to a child who fears death or is suffering from the loss of family or friend.

*The Book of Three Festivals.* By Amy Morris Lillie. Illustrated by James MacDonald. Dutton, \$2.50. Three stories each for Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving. The first story of each group has a New Testament setting; two of the nine have a background of the Middle Ages; one is about the Indians and the Plymouth colonists and three are modern. Stories are effectively written and are concerned with the origin of the festivals as well as with their significance in everyday living. Excellent for reading aloud where stories of high ethical content are desired.

*Buffalo Bill: Boy of the Plains.* By Augusta Stevenson. Illustrated by Paul Laune. Bobbs-Merrill, \$1.75. (Childhood of Famous Americans Series)

Younger boys who are interested in the old West will read eagerly this story of Bill Cody, a boy who helped in its building. The author has proved in her other books in this popular series that she knows how to write for children.

*Creative Activities.* By Rebecca Rice. Pilgrim press, \$2.75.

Parents, teachers and group leaders as well as boys and girls will find



this an excellent practical guide in many types of hand work. Diagrams, charts and clear, simple directions make it easy to carry out all sorts of projects with papier-mache, puppets, slides, panoramas and other means of making studies interesting.

*Dark House on the Moss.* By Constance Savery. Longmans, \$2.50.

Mystery and adventure story whose scene is laid in the north of England in the early 19th century. An orphaned brother and sister go to live with a distant cousin. They find him and his old serving man living in a great house by the side of a huge bog, shunned by his neighbors and tenants. Appreciating his goodness and kindness and sensing his loneliness they are his stalwart upholders. They form a sort of neutral friendship with a young relative who is absolutely at home on the marsh and who is one of the most outspoken and troublesome opponents of their cousin. Bit by bit they learn the roots of the mystery and watch it develop until the dramatic climax when the marsh overflows and justifies all the grim forebodings of Cousin Morville and gives him an opportunity to prove his real integrity and heroism.

*Ethan, the Shepherd Boy.* By Georgiana Dorcas Ceder. Illustrated by Helen Torrey. Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$2.00.

A clear picture of Palestine particularly of shepherd life in the hill country near Bethlehem is given in this tender and beautiful story. It concerns an orphan boy whose persevering devotion overcomes the coldness and rebuffs which he meets from his only kinsman. Reflects the symbolism of the New Testament and will help illuminate the child's future reading of the Bible. Simple enough to be read by fourth graders.

*The Horse Called Pete.* By Elisa Bialk. Illustrated by William Moyers. Houghton, \$2.00.

A lonely little boy on a farm received as a gift the brown and white circus horse which had captivated his heart. Although the horse was blind Davey taught him many tricks and in so doing learned that he himself must conquer fear. The spectacular finale of this heart-warming story will satisfy every child. The book has been vocabularized according to the Thorndike Fifth Grade word list.

*Lutler Burbank: Boy Wizard.* By Olive W. Burt. Illustrated by Clotilde Embree Funk. Bobbs-Merrill, \$1.75.

Another delightful member of the Childhood of Famous Americans Series. Boys and girls will enjoy greatly this story of a happy childhood on a Massachusetts farm in the



1850's. They may be surprised to learn little Luther was an inventor as well as a plant lover. The book is mainly concerned with Burbank's life before he was twenty-six when he left for California. The last chapter, however, gives a charming picture of the great Plant Wizard and his friends, the school children of Santa Rosa.

*Rabbits.* By Herbert S. Zim. Pictures by Joy Buba. William Morrow, \$2.00.

Cartoon-like pictures and diagrams and easy text make up a book on wild and domestic rabbits which will awaken interest in almost any young reader. In it he will learn about the different kinds of wild rabbits, how they live, what enemies they have and why they are hunted. Breeds of domestic rabbits are also shown and information given about their food, housing and handling. The large type and the blue tint of some of the pages help to make the book inviting.

*S-O-S Helicopter.* By Edward Ustick Bain. Illustrated by Edward B. Kemble. Whitman, \$2.00.

Tom, Dan and Rodney, formerly in the Army Air Corps, enter a training school for helicopter pilots. Upon completion of the training course one is sent to Australia, one to Alaska, and one to Brazil. The

helicopter can be used for purposes for which an ordinary plane is unfitted and occasions soon arise in which all three boys use their flying machines in services of mercy and good will.

*Susie.* By May Justus. Illustrated by Christine Chisholm. Whitman, \$1.50.

It was a red letter day for Susie and all the other Linders when Step-Along the peddler man came to spend the night in the little cabin in No-End Hollow. Fiddle tunes and a candy kettle help make what Susie calls a gladsome-gay time and there is a happy surprise for each member of the family before the peddler leaves. A slight story showing the everyday life of the Tennessee mountain people, good family relationships and the ability to find pleasure in simple things. Illustrated with bright crayon drawings.

*Terry and Bunky Play Basketball.* By Dick Fishel and Clair Hare. Drawings by L. D. Warren. Putnam, \$1.75.

Terry and Bunky, whom we have met before in stories of football and baseball, this time learn the technique of basketball from the star player on the university team.

*Thunder in the Mountains.* By Hilda Mary Hooke. Illustrated by Clare Bice. Oxford, \$2.50.

Characterized by beauty and a thread of ethical truth is this excellent new collection of myths and legends of Canada. The book is divided into three parts: stories of the Indians before the coming of the white men; stories concerning the coming of the white men; and white men's stories. Fine for story-telling.

### *For the Upper Grades*

*Blue Dowry.* By Florence Maule Updegraff. Illustrated by Robert Doremus. Harcourt, \$2.75.

An excellent book for an Americanism list is this story of the sturdy, high-wrought pre-Revolutionary period. Elizabeth Brandon has spent two years in her father's old home in England thoroughly enjoying the upper-class English life. Unlike her father, who is an Advocate of the Crown in Massachusetts, she lacks a sense of identity with New England people and a sympathy for their point of view. It is not until she spends some months with her maternal grandfather in a democratic community in Connecticut, developing new affections, friendships and interests, that she is able to appreciate the patriots' earnest stand for a principle. Descriptions of flax culture, spinning and weaving slow up the story but help make a good period piece.

*The Golden Flash.* By May McNeer.

Illustrated by Lynd Ward. Viking, \$3.00.

From New York across country to western Kansas Territory the magnificent fire engine rolled its slow but thrilling way. Thieves, circus performers, miners and pioneers, all had a finger in its fortunes. Presented to the city of New York in 1858, it was one of the first steam fire engines. Its life in this capacity was short, however. On September 20, two weeks after its advent the Golden Flash disappeared and New York knew it no more. In six lively episodes the author traces its subsequent fortunes unrolling an entertaining panorama of the times as well as telling a remarkably interesting story.

*Highpockets.* By John R. Tunis. Morrow, \$2.50.

"Frankly, you aren't a team player. You're in there for yourself on every play. You can't seem to forget your batting average. This'll have to change." And Cecil "Highpockets" McDade's attitude did change, but for a reason wholly unsuspected by his manager, Spike Russell. An injury to a strange boy brought about a new sense of values which made Highpockets willing to risk an injured arm and his future as a ballplayer for the standing of

the team. Excellent sport story full of suspense and human appeal.

*Judith of France.* By Margaret Leighton. Illustrated by Henry C. Pitz. Houghton, \$2.50.

Against the background of the turbulent times like a medieval tapestry is unfolded the breath-taking story of the beautiful granddaughter of Charlemagne. Married at fifteen to the aged king of the English she found life one long series of difficult and dangerous episodes which only her intelligence, her spirit and her high ideals enabled her to endure. She had the power of drawing to herself faithful friends and adorers of whom the gallant Bras de Fer was one. Her eventual marriage to him and their appointment as rulers of Flanders makes a happy ending to a captivating tale. Excellent for the girl who is taking her first step towards the adult novel.

*Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.* A pictorial interpretation painted by James Daugherty. Whitman, \$5.00.

In the belief that Lincoln's words are clear, strong and comforting in these clouded times when America has been called to spiritual leadership of the world the artist has given us this magnificently illustrated edition of the Gettysburg address. Reproductions of 15 paintings, symbolic

in character, interpret the text and form a brilliant panorama showing the striving toward the American ideal through the years.

*Mary Montgomery, Rebel.* By Helen F. Daringer. Illustrated by Kate Seredy. Harcourt, \$2.50.

Older girls will enjoy this story of Mary's life in Georgia, just previous to, and during the Civil War and her later school days in Indiana after the Siege of Atlanta. Not as much excitement as the title may indicate but it is a gay and lively picture of young people's life in the south, tinged with some pathos, a slight romance and no trace of bitterness.

*Ranger, Sea Dog of the Royal Mounted.* By Charles S. Strong. Illustrated by Kurt Wiese. Winston, \$2.00.

The mystery of the Samoyede dog set adrift in a kayak touches the life of a lonely boy in Halifax Harbor and involves him in a series of thrilling adventures.

*Rue Plays the Game.* By Josephine Blackstock. Putnam, \$2.50.

Lively, modern story, well presented. Rue wanted to be a playground director. In spite of the objections of her aunt Laura she managed to come to Chicago for a course in a physical education college. How she made good both at college and

# Army Education and the Teaching of Reading

PAUL COOKE<sup>1</sup>

The study of all phases of education toward improvement of the American system of education has included attention to the problems of education of adults. When the armed forces rejected several thousand men because of their inability to read and write on a "fourth grade level" the attention of educators and teachers was focused on a need of many adults in this country.

The armed forces, particularly the Army of the United States, became great teachers, and did a good bit about the problem of adult illiteracy as it affected them. And much of the effective teaching was done in improving the ability of the soldiers to read.

The purpose of this paper is to describe some of the practices in teaching word recognition and meaning as a part of teaching men to read in reading classes in the special training units, the Army organization unit of instruction for illiterate soldiers. With the successful example of the armed forces apparent to educators it may well be that greater attention will be given to aiding our illiterate adult population to become functionally literate.<sup>2</sup>

The goal for teaching reading in the Army grew directly out of the purpose of the special training units.<sup>3</sup> The Army found out that the increased induction meant acceptance of "large numbers of illiterate, non-English-speaking men, most

<sup>1</sup>Division of English, Miner Teachers College, Washington, D.C.

<sup>2</sup>The Office of Education, Specialist in Negro Education, has recognized the vital problem of adult illiteracy, which is now the concern of a long-range project, "Adult Education of Negroes," to lift their level of literacy.

classified as Grade V on the Army General Classification Test (slow-learning men). Special Training Units have been organized to give these men the necessary academic training to enable them to become useful soldiers."<sup>4</sup> The aim for instruction in reading, then, was to contribute as much as possible to making useful soldiers—functionally literate for Army needs.

The Army wanted men to be able to perform the many military duties which required written and spoken communication and which required reading. The objectives of reading were stated as follows:

- a. To develop the basic habits and skills in silent reading which will be adequate for life in the Army.
- b. To gain enough skill in oral reading to be able to pass on essential information.
- c. To develop enough skill in silent reading to be able to read letters and communication from friends and family.
- d. To develop desirable attitudes and interests through the use of supplementary reading materials in addition to those prescribed by the special training units.<sup>5</sup>

The six basic habits and skills of "a" above include word recognition and word meaning, the concern of this paper.

The Army found that the soldier needed a minimum reading ability of comprehending the printed page and following directions in order to succeed in the Army. It also determined

<sup>5</sup>The experience of the writer was gained during several months of teaching in the 1342nd Service Unit (Special Training Unit), Third Service Command, Holabird Signal Depot, Baltimore 19, Maryland.

It should be noted that means of teaching of reading and meaning to the men in this camp, largely native-born and English-speaking, may differ widely with successful methods in another special training unit handling men who do not speak English or who bring few concepts or limited experience to the reading class. Phonics, then, might be far less widely used.

<sup>4</sup>*Instruction in Special Training Units*. War Department Pamphlet 20-8. April 10, 1944. p. 1.

that it is possible for the illiterate soldier to acquire these basic reading habits and skills in a relatively short time—only ten weeks to reach an acceptable level.

As teachers in the public schools know, no one method used exclusively will solve the difficulties involved in word recognition. Army theory also subscribed to this statement. But it is equally true that when seventy-five percent of the words needed by and taught to the men name something they know or have experienced the problem becomes largely one of getting the men to say the word. Since the chief problem then is getting the men to phrase the word—a problem of recognition, generally, rather than meaning and use—the ability to attack words is valuable. The method of attack most used involved phonic skills; this will be discussed first.

### *Phonics*

Phonics is a broad term that covers a multitude of techniques. In general it is the method of recognizing words by sounding parts of the word and blending them into the whole. It requires two abilities, the ability to blend or synthesize sounds, and the ability to recognize the sound of a part of the word.<sup>6</sup>

Trainees in the 1342nd Service Unit (Special Training Unit) were given a sound foundation in phonics; especially in the lower levels, or earlier weeks of training. In Level IA, a grade for men unable to read or write, the soldiers first made the vowel sounds (simultaneously with learning to write the letters). Then gradually the men practiced blending the labials, dentals, gutturals, etc., with the so-called “long” and “short” vowels. These sounds were practiced in nonsense syllable form and in word form, both from wall charts. Blend

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup>*Illustrative Instructor's Reference*. War Department Film Strip 12-5. p. 57.

<sup>7</sup>Construction of the blend wheels is described fully in War Department Pamphlet 20-2, *Teaching Devices in Special Training Units*. pp. 10-11.



wheels were constructed to help trainees learn the initial blends, "ch," "sh," "wh," and "th."<sup>7</sup> The initial blends were coupled with certain other sounds that form words commonly used. Such words as "chap," "ship," "their," and "who," were thus formed and read by the trainee through a small slot in the blend wheels. The trainees learned to form the sounds and say the words at the same time. About eight or ten words were printed on each of the blend wheels.

This work in phonics was also emphasized through the next four levels of the program. By the time most men reached the fourth level (six to nine weeks later) a sound phonic basis had been established. This ability to voice sounds, which of course often caused mispronunciations, was evident when the men called "island" just as the word appeared to be, and said "is-land," (short vowel sound), and when they gave the word "ocean" a "hard c." The reaction of the soldiers to what might be considered silly nonsense syllables or baffling sound analysis of words is distinctly encouraging. The men make every effort to read the words in the *Army Reader*<sup>8</sup> and in supplementary material through a phonic attack.

It is in this manner that the men learned to read many words naming things and experiences with which they are familiar. They brought broad experience and varied concepts and ideas to the reading of the page. A few words studied in the *Army Reader* follow:

<i>First Level</i>	<i>Second Level</i>		<i>Third Level</i>
Identification tag	right	left	cigarettes
laundry tag	cadence	count	tooth powder
bed tag	corporal	sergeant	chewing gum
mess hall	drill	exercise	razor blades
barracks	shirt		

Not as much attention was given to the sounding of diphthongs, although some incidental teaching was directed to this problem of phonics. It is, of course, discouraging even to

<sup>8</sup>*Army Reader*. Technical Manual 21-500. War Department. May 14, 1943.



pupils of secondary level to meet with the different sound problems in such words as "count" and "country." It was just as evident that phonics is of no help in attacking many other words, such as "height" and "weight" in Arithmetic on Level III of the Special Training Program.

### Context

By building on words and ideas already known to the trainees many words can be read in context. Possibly this method was the second most widely used and effective in teaching men

It is highly possible that most trainees would have read both of the following sentences with some ease:

Soldiers use mop and water to clean the floor.

The soldier with two stripes is the corporal.

Because most words in these two sentences were known to the men, the underlined words were learned through context. The men were encouraged and taught to read the entire sentence to try to work out the puzzling words with the aid of the remainder of the idea.

A favorite technique used in this approach both for teaching and testing purposes was the multiple choice exercise. A sample from the *Army Reader*, Level IV, for re-teaching five words follows:

determined   obedient   alert   cooperative   loyal

1. Private Pete was \_\_\_\_\_ to try to become a good soldier.
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ soldier will stand by his outfit.
3. On guard duty the \_\_\_\_\_ soldier is watchful.
4. Teamwork in the Army calls for \_\_\_\_\_ soldiers.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ trainee obeys orders of his officers.

This method, teaching reading through the context approach, was also successful when words were taught for the

first time, particularly those words with which the trainees have previously experienced.

The soldiers live in the *barracks*.

Private Pete sleeps in a bed.

The company marches to the drill field.

The notice was on the *bulletin* board.

Soldiers do not talk when standing *at ease*.

The words underlined above can be read through study of the meaning of the sentence and by building on what is known. Phonics, too, plays a part in this method; in fact, it is this combination of phonics and context that is possibly the most effective way of encouraging word recognition and word meaning.

Setting or context was also important to study shades of meanings of words. The soldier could be shown that the exact meaning of words depends on its use in the particular thought. A soldier in Level IV when asked to explain the meaning of the word "rule" gave several meanings: "a foot measure," "laws for the people," and "leader of a country" (the trainee meant "ruler"). The second meaning is closest to the use of the word in this sentence in the *Army Reader*; "This is why there are some rules in the Army that are not found in civilian life." Reading from context established the correct meaning of the word as used in the above sentence. In this part of "Private Pete," as the *Army Reader* is generally known, the phrase "Golden Rule" is also used.

It is noted that, just as phonics fails with a word like "tough," so reading through context is not helpful in many sentences. For example, in the sentence "Pete went to the canteen to buy candy," the last word can hardly be read from context, for so many articles can be bought at the PX and canteen. But in the same sentence "buy" is likely to be read because the usual method to obtain anything in the PX would be to buy the article.

### *Spelling Words*

A number of trainees said in class, "Wait a minute. Let me spell the word. I'll get it then." Spelling the word helped many soldiers to recognize it. In a way it is an effort at phonics on their part—phonics that might work if the soldier knew "where the sound stops," as one said.

Spelling words is inimical to reading the whole word, however, and an obstacle to quick recognition. It seemed reasonable, though to allow some men to tackle a word letter by letter and finally to read it, encouraging the men at the same time to break the word into sounds or to study the context.

Spelling the word as a means to word recognition seemed characteristic of poorer readers.

### *Physical Details*

Very few trainees who learn the word "identification" in Level I or the word "Mediterranean Sea" in Level III fail to recognize the words the next time in reading. Length and certain physical details fixed the word in the trainees' mind. A number of words can be retained because of such unusual characteristics or qualities as "relative length of the word, the height of the middle and end letters, and the position of letters going below the line." This was true of the words "organization," "insurance," "non-commissioned," "break-fast," "government," "George Washington," all words learned during the eleven-week program.

Some of the words prefixed by "ex-," such as "example," "expense," were also remembered because of the rarely used letter "x." Watching for the visual details can be just as misleading as in the learning of the meaning of words beginning with "ex." The Trainees also have the words "defend" and "depend" in Level IV. The soldiers may remember the two

words because of the letters extending below the line, the "f" and the "p," and confuse the words for the same reason.

The value of this approach to teaching word recognition and meaning is obviously limited but should be emphasized for its occasional helpfulness.

### *Association*

The association of an object or picture with the corresponding word has always been most helpful in teaching people to read. The Army makes extensive use of this method.

The film strip was used to teach both words that the trainees knew and those not experienced. The value of the film strip rested in that "the method presents the word as a whole and associates it with a picture to give it meaning. Auditory factors are utilized by the instructor when he reads the word orally."<sup>10</sup> Both recognition and meaning were stressed through use of the film strip. Oral and written work was developed in a variety of situations. A worksheet, developed by the Army, checked the recognition of the trainees. Suggested procedures in using the film strip follow:

- (1) Pointing to objects or pictures of the objects (soldiers, barracks).
- (2) Using gestures and demonstrations to indicate size, shape, or action (eats meat with fork).
- (3) Translating the word from a foreign language (table, *las mesa*; bread, *la pan*).
- (4) Describing with other words the appearance, use, and quality of the object (toothbrush, pencil).
- (5) Comparing or contrasting the new with the old, familiar objects and their word symbols (uniform).
- (6) Describing the whole in terms of its parts or the part relationship to the whole (dinner, post exchange, door).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Illustrative Instructor's Reference. War Department Film Strip 12-5. June, 1944. p. 55.

Eight strips for teaching words and ideas were available for instruction in the 1342nd S.T.U.

Another associatory approach required the trainee to match a word with a picture. The picture may be on one side of a card, the word with the other side. Or several pictures may be mimeographed on a sheet of paper, the words written or printed on the reverse side. Another technique included representation of the objects in one column and the symbols in scrambled order listed in the opposite order. Trainees match by drawing lines from symbol to picture.

In addition, several instructors in the unit built up picture libraries to aid in teaching word recognition and meaning. Particularly helpful and always available in current magazines were pictures of Post Exchange articles and enlisted men and officers. The actual objects were also used: War Bonds, life insurance policies, yardsticks, fifths, and quarts. It is known that the object itself is more effective than the semi-concrete approach.

This discussion described several means used to help illiterate men to recognize words and understand their meanings. A dictionary of fourth level words was prepared by the writer as another means of teaching word meaning.

A great factor in determining the most effective method of word mastery is the amount of experience the student brought to his class and to the printed page. Practically all instructors agreed that more important than taking from the printed page is the bringing of experiences and ideas that will give meaning to the puzzling printed symbols. The Army instructor generally did not need to provide for the soldiers many of the experiences helpful to their reading; whereas the elementary school teacher finds it necessary to escort her pupils to the bakery, the market, the dairy, etc., to provide for them

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 3.

these valuable experiences so necessary to the reading. To increase the skill in word recognition the Army instructor may depend to a great extent on teaching phonics.

In Levels IA through III almost all the words in the Reader the soldiers knew from experience. Not until he reached Level IV were the words generally new to his experience. The problem was mainly one of recognition. Phonics as the best single attack and combined with contextual approach was most helpful. For all soldiers the film strip was valuable. Spelling the words and remembering visual details help some trainees. A combination of methods is often the solution—and results count in the Army.

Although much of what has been discussed above is not new to civilian schools for children, it is far less widespread in schools for adults where the problem of literacy also must be attacked.

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# Storytelling

MABEL POWERS (YEHSENNOHWEHS)<sup>1</sup>

Storytelling is the oldest of the arts. It harks back to the time when primitive men gathered about the fire and told of the wonders they had seen and heard. Later, a storyteller served as a tribal library and went about among the people telling them their history and traditions. Storytelling was also carried on in the Indian lodges: different members of the family preserved different kinds of lore: grandfather telling the history of the tribe; father, the hunting stories of the chase; grandmother, the fairy stories; and mother, the religious stories, for to the mother was entrusted the spiritual teaching of youth.

Storytelling has its roots in the natural desire to share with others what one has heard and enjoyed. Apparently it will never go out of fashion. However, I am not quite sure that it is wise to put storytelling under a microscope and dissect it. It seems to me if we analyze it too carefully, we are likely to lose the essence, that volatile something that makes a story a story: that imaginative, emotional quality that is the very breath of life to a story.

It is interesting to know the cellular life of a tree, its molecular activity, form, structure, amount of material, its uses; but we never know a tree until we have communed with a tree, listened to its message, felt its beauty and kinship, loved and enjoyed a tree. No amount of chemical analysis gives one the spirit of a tree. So no amount of analytical story-technique will make a storyteller.

I know of no secrets in storytelling, except to feel and enjoy a story so much that others feel and enjoy it with you. Make a story so alive that the audience reacts with like emotions, laughs, thrills, and experiences the same heart-warming that you have felt in telling it. There should always be a delightful interplay between the audi-

<sup>1</sup>Storyteller of the Iroquois, Wahmedah Lodge, Chautauqua, New York.



ence and the storyteller. To blow the breath of life into a story, the storyteller must live it, absorb it into ones very being. Do not consciously and methodically commit a story. Get the essential points well in mind, and the form will take care of itself and spontaneity will result.

A story can not be told too simply and directly. There should always be a sense of intimacy. In no way can this be better secured than in a circle around a fire: there is magic in a council ring. Seated in a circle, each one has the best seat. Each can see and be seen. This makes each one feel that he, or she, is a part of the group and has a share in all that goes on in it. The circle is dignified and democratic.

That others may be interested in a story the situations must be relived, ideas rekindled created anew each time into living substance in the mind of the storyteller. It must not become a mechanical process. A colorful and trained voice that reflects and interprets truly the personal traits and attributes of the characters, that makes situations, people, and events come alive, adds much to storytelling. Good enunciation, intonation, and breath support are needed. In getting an idea over, often a pause is more effective than words. It is not what is said, but the ability to carry over, through a pause, the picture and emotion desired.

The chief function of a story is to give joy, and to reveal some aspect of spirit, of beauty and truth. Instruction, moral and ethical content should not be overstressed, for we absorb only that which we enjoy. Avoid description. Children do not want to be told about a thing, they want the thing itself. So set your stage and bring on your characters at once. Children want action. If description is given, it must be graphic and dramatic.

Children like repetition. It relieves concentration. They like to hear a familiar phrase. They love rhythm, as do we all. A suggestion of mystery in the voice attracts attention as "Once—a—long—long—time—ago—" Children like to anticipate an event, follow the dramatic sequence and work out their own conclusion.

How far should one impersonate? It depends on one's training and ability to put oneself in the place of another, to think as he thought, feel as he felt, through creative imagination. Anything that helps a child to visualize more clearly an event, situation, or character is good. It is natural to impersonate. We love to play a part. It extends personality, enlarges consciousness. When a little girl dresses up in a long trailing gown, her personality extends the full length of that train. An Indian wears a trailing war bonnet. His personality extends to the very tip of those colorful feathers. A story told by means of character-impersonation and the use of Indian expressions and mannerism is very effective—if the storyteller can impersonate so well that the audience loses sight of the person telling the story.

Indians are especially happy in their stories. They do not punish their children but provide moral and ethical teaching through their stories. They have stories to illustrate the virtue they wish to teach, or fault to correct—for example, entertaining stories to illustrate the effect of greediness, boastfulness, selfishness and cowardice, and the value of fortitude, thrift, gratitude, generosity, truth, and reverence. These stories contain familiar images and are always within a child's experience. Children enjoy them so much that they unconsciously absorb and assimilate the ethical truth.

A great violinist says that he works more on his music with mind and feeling than with bow and instrument. "It is imperative that I hear and feel first what I am going to play before I play it." So it is with the storyteller.

Can you see the smoke curl upward from the fire and smell the fragrance of pine and cedar? Can you picture the dark-skinned circle of Indian listeners wrapped in blankets as the traditional storyteller begins? Through imagination create the atmosphere desired, then lose yourself in your story, enjoy telling it, and everyone will enjoy it with you.

# "The Mathematics of Grammar"

The following formula for the structure of the simple sentence, contributed by Edwin Rakow, of the Bent Junior High School, Bloomington, Ill., may appeal to some upper grade pupils who are mathematically minded:

Let:

S	=	sentence
Cs	=	complete subject
Cp	=	complete predicate
ss	=	simple subject
sp	=	simple predicate
v	=	verb
vph	=	verb phrase
m	=	modifier (s)
m	=	modifier (s)

We know:

$$S = Cs + Cp$$

$$Cs = ss \pm m$$

$$Cp = sp \pm m; \text{ we also know that:}$$

$$sp = v$$

$$\text{or } sp = vph$$

$$\text{and } vph = v$$

Therefore:

$$Cp = v \pm m$$

Substituting, we have:

$$S = (ss \pm m) + (v \pm m)$$

Compound subject and compound predicates might be designated thus:

$$Cs = ss \pm m$$

$$1, 2, 3, \text{ etc.} \quad 1, 2, 3, \text{ etc.}$$

$$Cp = v \pm m$$

$$1, 2, 3, \text{ etc.} \quad 1, 2, 3, \text{ etc.}$$

A simple sentence having a compound subject and a verb (or verb phrase) might be equated:

$$S = (ss \pm m) + (v \pm m)$$

$$1, 2 \quad 1, 2$$

If the predicate only is compounded, it would become:

$$S = (ss \pm m) + (v \pm m)$$

$$1, 2 \quad 1, 2$$

It follows that in the case of both subject and predicate being Compound, the equation is obvious.

# Composition Can Be Interesting

ANNA C. JENSEN<sup>1</sup>

One evening when I called upon some friends of mine, I found the father, a banker, in a very unhappy frame of mind.

Turning to me he said, "Isn't anything being done in the schools nowadays to enable our boys and girls to write a simple paragraph, and have the spelling and punctuation correct? Look at this."

The paper he showed me was pretty bad. I recalled how often, as I graded composition papers, I wondered why mistakes continued to be numerous and the compositions dull and uninteresting, in spite of all my efforts.

That night I decided I would do something about it—something to bring about a change and make English have greater importance in the minds of my pupils.

An idea took form and I began the very next morning to make it grow.

During my travels extending over many years I had gathered all manner of curios and interesting specimens, stalactites, stalagmites, stone flower formations, fossils, a trap door spider's home, petrified woods, abalone and other shells, huge cones from the giant trees of California, glacial balls, and the like.

To say that my pupils manifested a deep interest in the collection was putting it mildly. To satisfy their curiosity I permitted them to handle and examine every object.

Since the cave formations seemed to hold their greatest interest I told them as thrillingly as I could of my visit to Mammoth Cave and others of greater beauty. They sat enthralled.

<sup>1</sup>A former teacher in the Chicago Public Schools.

When I had finished my talk, the questions came thick and fast, and the lively discussion which followed seemed to be enjoyed by even the dullest.

The following day I called for volunteers to talk on the subject. The response was truly gratifying. No groping for words. They had something interesting to say and they said it in a highly interesting manner.

For homework I required them to bring in *short* compositions on the subject. Here I found plenty of room for improvement in both spelling and punctuation. Board work by individual pupils assisted by the class brought improvement slowly but surely and was encouraging both to them and to me.

As the days went on the stories they wrote became more and more interesting. They were alive and they began to use better titles for their compositions. I recall a few.

Gradual Dripping through the Ages

A River without Banks

What the Echoes Told Me

The Music of Unseen Waters.

The method I have described was used until all objects in my collection had been the subject of both oral and written composition.

Meanwhile I had given each pupil a mimeographed sheet of twenty-five questions for I had other cards to play, when the gloss of novelty should have worn off of the first method.

A few of the questions used follow.

What are Rubber "Hams"?

Why has the cocoanut three "eyes" on the top?

How did the Indians make glue?

Why do Eskimos wear masks sometimes?

To what country would you go to hear Concert Pigeons?

Ever hear of cannon balls growing on a tree?

What bird is called a standard bearer?

My pupils were surprised when they found I had no intention of answering these questions. You see I wanted to arouse the children to a realization of what our various institutions offer them in the visualization method of education and to excite their interest and curiosity for, after all, that is the basis of all search for knowledge.

So when the weather moderated I began to invite groups of about ten pupils to be my guests on a trip to one of our great institutions of learning.

I took the first group to the Field Museum and of this number one only had ever been there before. There was breathless expectation as we approached the great building.

The African elephants which are so conspicuous in the Main Hall did not interest them much for, of course, they had all seen elephants before. Lions too, they had seen, but when they learned that the two they were looking at were the very ones, that by their killings had actually stopped construction on the railroad the British were building through a jungle in Africa, they were fascinated.

Leaving these ferocious beasts we went upstairs to study in the Indian exhibit. The children saw life-size figures representing Indians engaged in the quarrying of flint by using strong branches of trees. These large masses of stone were reduced to smaller ones by being lifted high above their heads and then brought down with great force upon rocks lying before them.

They saw tepees and learned that it took from fifteen up to eighteen buffalo hides to make a tepee, and that the skins had to be renewed every two or three years. When renewal was necessary, it was accompanied by a ceremony.

There were a great many other types of homes, for different tribes had different ideas of how homes should be made. Some

tribes used overlapping sheets of elm or cedar bark on a light framework of poles. Other homes looked like bee-hives and the poles were covered with coarse grass held in place by willow withes.

All of a sudden there was an excited exclamation.

"I know how the Indians made glue."

"Suppose you tell us, John."

"They made it from the tips of antlers and kept it on the end of a stick. When needed it was heated and applied."

As we walked about the Indian exhibit the children fell completely under the spell of what they saw; a great many of their incorrect notions were corrected in the hour, and I heard one of the boys say to another, "I would like an Indian boy for a pal. I bet he could teach me a lot of things."

Too often the history books stress the cruelty of the Indian. They forget to mention his many skills accomplished under great difficulties and with only a limited number of tools.

Next the children insisted they wanted to see the Eskimo exhibit for there had been a movie in the neighborhood, which had aroused their interest.

Life-size figures wearing strange fur garments, a kayak and bags of every description gave them plenty to talk about. A bag that resembled a real seal caught their eyes at once. I explained that it could not look otherwise, since to make it the Eskimos removed the skin whole from a small seal. With the eyes and nose sewed up they have a perfectly waterproof bag of which every family has from one to three. There were so very many kinds and sizes of bags that the children began to realize there must be some purpose in the making of so many.

A few questions on my part as to what they thought they would do with spare clothing, valuable furs, dressed skins, dried



berries, mosses and fish etc., if they lived under the climatic conditions the Eskimos do, brought home the fact they must have something in which to store their belongings.

While the girls studied the clothing made by the women, the boys became interested in the fierce masks representing departed Eskimos and supernatural beings. They saw animal masks worn during the dances that honor the animals represented.

As in the case of the Indians, the children acquired a great many new ideas, and were impressed by the hard work done by both men and women, and were surprised to learn that even the Eskimos have parties and happy occasions, as do people living under better climatic conditions.

On the way home I told my happy friends that I wanted each one to prepare a *brief* account of our trip, to write about whatever had interested them most.

Monday's English lesson was an inspiration to me. The compositions were very, very good, and the reading of them gave the other children the urge, the desire to go and see what was to be seen in our great institutions of learning.

Now came the time for the second group to go and when I told them we were going to the Art Institute, there seemed to be a decided feeling of opposition to the plan. When I asked why they felt as they did I was told they didn't care to look at paintings.

"I am sorry you feel that way about art, but there are other things there, that I am sure will prove highly interesting."

"Like what?" asked one.

"Do mummies interest you?"

The air cleared at once, and we went to the Institute where we found something of interest every moment. In the

Egyptian Room they saw the model of a boat fully manned and equipped for either sailing or rowing. This had been taken from a tomb, and provided to enable the soul of the departed one to journey to the sacred city of Osiris, where the ruler of the dead held sway.

The children were not complaining now as we went over to the mummies. Here they learned that the Egyptians wanted the bodies of their dead preserved for future use, and as an aid to preservation the body was wrapped in yards and yards of linen bandages glued together and coated with stucco. They also used gum resins and perfumed spices to preserve the body. Then after many days it was placed in burial chambers. Everything was done to keep the burial places a secret, and safe against robbery and violation, but to no avail. Most of the precious contents have been removed to museums long ago.

When the second group read their accounts of what they had seen, I knew very definitely that I was going to get the results I wanted, for the children realized that not only were they improving in both oral and written composition, but were adding to their store of knowledge, and I invited a third group to be my guests.

This time we visited a Cave Man in his rock shelter. The man himself surprised the children. He was so short, as were also his arms. His knees were quite bent, and he resembled a wild animal more than a man. He lived, perhaps, during the glacial age. He knew how to kindle a fire and how to make stone implements. How the boys wished they could hear him talk!

Beside this exhibit we saw a swamp forest, such as existed in carboniferous times, when ferns grew tall as trees. One of these trees had seeds, the shape and size of hens' eggs hanging at the extreme tip of each leaf.

The girls squirmed as they looked at the huge, primitive insects that sat on the tree trunks. Vultures were resting in the trees, and huge white ant nests dotted the landscape.

Turning we came to a group of little antelopes standing about thirteen inches at the shoulder. They had the most beautiful big brown eyes and horns only two inches long. The children grew very enthusiastic over these Dik Diks, and were reluctant to leave the little creatures until I said "Concert Pigeons next."

These pigeons are to be seen and heard in China. Whistles are fastened to the tail feathers of the birds, when they are young. When the flock flies, the wind strikes the upright whistles, sets them vibrating, and the result is concert music of a kind. All the whistles in the flock are tuned to a different key and serve to protect the flocks from birds of prey. The Chinese people love these Concert Pigeons and derive much pleasure from the musical sounds.

While the children were still discussing the Dik Diks and the Pigeons, I led them to the Cannon Ball Tree. They were amazed at the size of the gorgeous blossoms and the great seeds that give the tree its name. They look exactly like rusty cannon balls, and grow only on special branches coming out of the lower part of the tree. It takes more than a year to ripen these seeds, and then they burst with a sound like that of a heavy artillery discharge.

Beside it stood a Brazil-nut tree, which belongs to a family with a queer name, monkey-pots, so called because of the shape of the fruit, which is like a pot or urn with a cover on it. The seeds are so firmly packed inside that once removed they can never be replaced. The nuts are quite heavy and when ripe, they fall and become imbedded in the soil, because they fall from such a great height.

Leaving these two interesting trees we came to the "Killer"

tree. It gets its name because it spreads out and strangles to death all trees within reach. Standing near this tree was a triangular cactus plant completely covered with gorgeous flowers, each one of which sheltered a bat.

"Ever hear of turpentine orcharding?"

They hadn't, and so we went to see about that.

"I think you'll feel sorry for the Long-leaved Pine or when you see what has happened to them. The children really looked sympathetic when they saw the trees. Each tree looked worse than the next. Every one of the four trees represented a different year. The first year a niche or "Box" is cut in the tree in the early winter. It is about seven inches deep, fourteen inches across and is about a foot from the ground.

By the end of the year all my pupils had been my guests, and we had studied at the Chicago Historical Society, the Planetarium, the Rosenwald Museum, the Conservatory, the Chicago Freight Tunnels, the Arboretum, and the Aquarium.

Eighty per cent of my pupils had been on the Honor Roll in both oral and written composition, and I had a set of papers I was proud to send to my friend, the banker.

He delighted the youngsters by sending them a letter in which he said, "Congratulations. A task well done is an accomplishment."

A father wrote, "When my son came home and told me about that Council House out there with a ridge pole weighing a ton and a half, I decided I could learn a lot by going out there too. Thanks for the tip."

Other parents sent notes saying their children had never been so interested, never had so much to talk about at home.

# Look and Listen

*Edited by*

LILLIAN NOVOTNY<sup>1</sup>

## *Radio*

Although a few educators still believe that radio in the classroom depends entirely upon classroom listening, most have agreed that there are innumerable activities engaged in by students which can contribute to their increased understanding of the fourth R, or the fifth dimension in our livingrooms, without necessitating the presence of a radio in the classroom itself.

An extremely interesting listing of activities may be found in the new Girl Scout handbook which carries the announcement of a new badge, RADIO. Encouraging the members of this youth organization to bring the results of their findings to the attention of their classmates could well prove mutually beneficial; and a beginning made in radio discussions in this way might lead to many ramifications in the field. This is a natural way to coordinate community activities with those of the classroom in order to enable the student to gain a better understanding of the world in which he lives.

Although the activities are suggested for the junior high school level,

many of them will lend themselves to a wide chronological interest range:

## RADIO

SYMBOL: Broadcasting tower

To earn this badge, do ten of these activities. The two starred are required.

1. Keep a record of all the radio programs heard in your home for a month. List them as entertaining, informative, and educational. Discuss in your troop which of these programs are most helpful in your schoolwork, in becoming a well informed individual, in just relaxing.
2. Listen regularly for a month to your favorite radio program. As you listen, jot down notes on the following: Is it well presented? What do you think is its purpose? What do you like best about it? What would you change?
3. Plan a "listening party" with your troop members. Tune in at least three different types of program: a broadcast from another country; a local broadcast having an international program; serious music pro-

<sup>1</sup>A teacher in the Chicago Public Schools and member of the Council's Committee on Radio.

gram; dramatic, quiz, variety program, and so forth. After listening, discuss what you have heard: what would be a balanced radio program diet for you; what influence radio can and does have on everyone's daily living.

\*4. Visit a broadcasting studio or read about one. Find out what is involved in producing a program for a broadcast, such as direction, acting, writing, announcing, sound effects, and so forth.

5. Talk with people who work in radio or read about them. Find out what they do, how they became interested in and trained for their jobs. Report to the troop.

6. Write a short radio announcement for one of the following uses: a commercial advertisement; a commentary for a serious music program or a popular music concert; a spot announcement.

7. Write a brief radio announcement of the service activities of your troop, or a description of Girl Scout Birthday activities in your town, or a commemoration of Juliette Low's birthday.

8. Find out how at least five commonly used sound effects are produced on the air or for televised broadcasts.

9. Demonstrate the basic differ-

ences in acting on the stage, in the movies, on the radio.

10. Listen to announcers of different types of programs. Learn the necessary background and training for the announcer's job. Know the announcer's responsibility for the program while it is on the air.

11. Do activity 13 in the Play Producer badge.

\*12. With troop members, plan a fifteen-minute broadcast based on a Girl Scout activity. Divide responsibility for: writing or securing the script, including opening and closing announcements; composing or selecting appropriate musical accompaniment; collecting sound effects; acting it out; directing; and announcing. Give the program on the radio if you can, or give it as a mock broadcast.

13. Take part in a radio broadcast.

14. Know the meaning of at least five of the following terms: ad lib, audition, PA, continuity, on the nose, commercial, web, platter, voice level, ham operator. Know the signs used for communication during a broadcast.

15. Organize a mock quiz broadcast based on information about radio terms, such as microphone, transmitter, kilocycle, broadcasting band, FCC, network, transcription, television, frequency modulation.

16. Show your understanding of radio transmission by describing the process to your troop members. Include in your description the use of radio transmission in foreign news broadcasts, speeches, and regularly scheduled programs from other lands.

17. Learn about the development of radio leading to its present form. Know the use of radio in police work, by ships at sea, in news transmission, operation of airplanes, aerial photography, radio telephone, and radiogram.

18. Help compose a radio broadcast of a half hour's length on the subject of "Radio in the Future."

19. Send and receive a message in International Code at the rate of five words a minute.

20. Be able to explain the mechanism of a radio.

The CBS Documentary Unit, widely hailed as a radio pioneer and leading delineator of major national problems, launched its second year on March 24 with "Report Card," a broad survey of education in the United States. Going beyond acknowledged physical shortcomings of our educational structure, it explored the need for new, dynamic concepts linking the classroom to life's realistic needs.

The other five Documentary Unit productions for the first six months of this year are:

*Baseball*—Radio's first full-scale study of the great American game, seen through the life and times of Pee Wee Reese, Dodgers' shortstop, with the participation of his family, baseball's oldtimers, National and American League representatives, his team-mates, fans, umpires—a complete cross-section of Americans whose lives are touched by the sport. Narrated by Red Barber, CBS Sports Director, the broadcast has been planned in time for the season's opening.

*The American Indian*—A dramatic documentary based on an extensive investigation of the economic and social crisis now facing America's 300,000 Indians. The broadcast, to be produced for the Unit by the staff of WCCO, CBS Minneapolis-St. Paul station, will reflect weeks of study at Indian reservations throughout the country. It is scheduled for May.

*Political Careers*—An examination of the ingredients of elective political careers in the United States, gathered through interviews with hundreds of public officials in city, state, and federal positions. The broadcast will be presented in late spring, timed for the national party conventions.



*The Motion Picture Industry*—An analysis of the creative and social decisions involved in the production of motion pictures in America. The broadcast will project the history of "The Best Years of Our Lives," 1947 Academy winner, against the background of the industry's practices and customs. First of a special cycle of four 1948 documentaries on mass communications industries, the broadcast will be presented late in May.

*The Magazine Industry*—The second of the special communications cycle, it will be ready for production early in July. The Documentary Unit will examine the *Time-Life-Fortune* publications as part of the pattern of American magazines today. (Two other aspects of mass communications will be presented in the second half of 1948.)

Commenting on this blueprint for the first half of 1948, Robert P. Heller, CBS Documentary Unit Chief, said:

"The Unit's first year proved that the American people want their facts objectively presented, sharply focussed, dramatically projected. Unit broadcasts on juvenile delinquency, our national health, the peacetime uses of atomic science, the problems of old age, our progress in race and minority relations and other related

subjects, won immediate, widespread approval. Audiences not only wanted the truth; they were stimulated to act upon it. They formed community councils; they dug deeper into all of these problems.

"Now, as the Unit enters its second year, we hope to cast sharp and clear light upon a wider canvas of American life. We shall continue to maintain our objectivity on all subjects. We shall continue to spend much time, as much time as necessary, to present full, clear pictures of the country's major problems and interests."

NBC is also turning its microphones toward current national problems to mirror the facts and theories of today, the plans for the future, the present difficulties, in a series entitled, "Living 1948." The contents of this new series are based on topics which George Gallup and his American Institute of Public Opinion find are of absorbing current interest. When the subjects chosen concern the activities of national organizations, NBC will invite their cooperation. Some of the subjects include: shortages of housing and materials which contribute to the complexities of the business of living in every part of the country; what our schools are doing to start children on projects which build

world cooperation and understanding; the causes of marital unrest, resulting in the alarming rise in the divorce rates and its effect upon our society. Consult your local NBC station or newspapers for the time and day of this weekly half-hour series.

Although television plans in other parts of the country have not gone forward so rapidly as they have on the East coast, it is interesting to see what rapid strides are being made. In the Midwest, WGN-TV has announced that this station will be on the air from 4 to 6 hours a day when the regular schedule of telecasts is launched on April 5, with the prospect of later extending programming into the morning hours for the benefit of housewives. In addition to programs devoted to sports, newsreel and radio programs, plans are under way to present educational shows. Frank P. Schreiber, manager of WGN Inc., outlined the possibilities as follows: "Chicago presents a wealth of educational program material. By educational I mean telecasts from such interesting places as the Rosenwald Museum of Science, the Field Museum, the Brookfield Zoo, the Chicago Historical Society, the great universities—Northwestern, Chicago, Loyola, and De Paul. You can depend on us for this type of programming on a complete basis, either direct or by film."

Another interesting video development which holds great promise from an educational point of view, is the use of television in connection with medical conventions. This June, some 1500 medical men will watch a series of operations via television. Two cameras will be used for each operating room, one for close-ups and the other for the long view. While the surgery takes place at Passavant Hospital, the doctors will be assembled at the Sheraton Hotel, Navy Pier, and at the Northwestern University Medical School. The possibility of intimate instruction through television to large numbers of students at one time offers tremendous possibilities.

### Films

Coronet Instructional Films has announced the release of two new films for literature: *England: Background of Literature* and *Scotland: Background of Literature*. The first takes students to England to show them that storied land as the inspiration for the nation's greatest writers: the London of Chaucer, Dickens, and Browning; the Countryside which was so meaningful to Shakespeare, Keats, Wordsworth, and Kipling; and the Sea, as Coleridge, Conrad, and Masfield wrote of it. The second helps students understand that rugged country so they can better appreciate the spirit that springs

from the land: Scotland's proud impetuous romanticism; the inspiration of men like Scott, Burns, Stevenson, and Daniel Defoe.

Both of these 16 mm. sound-motion pictures, one reel in length, are recommended for classes from the junior high school through adult levels. They were produced in collaboration with Dr. John J. De Boer, Editor of *Elementary English*, and Professor of Education, University of Illinois. They may be purchased in full color for \$90 each, or in black and white for \$45 each. They are also available through leading rental outlets. For a complete catalog, or further information on purchase, lease-purchase, or rental sources, write to Coronet Instructional Films, Coronet Building, Chicago 1, Illinois.

A grant of \$10,000 a year for two years has been awarded to the Film Council of America by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, it was announced by Stephen M. Corey, chairman of the board of trustees of the FCA.

The Carnegie grant, largest single contribution so far made to the growing Film Council of America, was made in a letter received from Robert M. Lester, secretary of the corporation. Earmarked for the salary and administrative expenses of an executive director, it will enable

the FCA to name a man in the near future who will speed the organization of community film councils throughout North America and extend the services of the national office to them. Eighty-seven councils have already been organized, and the Film Council has a goal of 350 this year. Thurman White, on leave as director of audio-visual education at Oklahoma University, served as executive director of the FCA during the last quarter of 1947, and has continued to serve on a part-time basis during 1948 while studying for his doctorate at the University of Chicago.

Its constituent members, now eight in number, include the American Library Association, Educational Film Library Association, National University Extension Association, National Education Association, National Association of Visual Education Dealers, Allied Non-Theatrical Film Association, National Film Society of Canada, and the American Association of Adult Education.

### *Recordings*

Featuring Audio-Guide, the built-in teacher's aid that gives pre- and post-listening suggestions to both teacher and students, Training Aids, Inc., 7414 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles 36, California, announces five recordings available for class-

room use: *The Outrageous Toy*, the story of Alexander Graham Bell; *The Bird Man*, John James Audubon; *Dividing a Continent*, Col. George Goethals; *Splendid Legend*, Mark Twain; and *Doctor Elizabeth*, Elizabeth Blackwell, America's first woman doctor. Each transcription is 16 inch, 33 1/3 r.p.m., double-faced vinylite, and includes a 15 minute program and the recorded guide to successful use of the presentation. The recordings are available singly or as a series. For more information write to the above address.

### General

Air-Age Education Research is greatly reducing the prices of its teaching aids in order that the materials which it has developed during the past four years can now be made available to as many schools and colleges as possible. Air-Age Wall Maps come in two sets: Set 1 includes *World around the United States*, *World around Europe*, *World around Alaska*, and *World around USSR*. Set 2 includes *World around China*, *World around Australia*, *World*

*around South Africa*, and *World around India*. It is a series of world maps centered on eight principal regions of the world. Each pictures how a person in that area looks at the world around him. The new idea is invaluable in world relations. Azimuthal equidistant projection. Maps are in two colors, 32"x40". The United States map is in four colors, size 42"x50". Formerly a set of nine maps sold for \$7.00; now, a set of four maps costs \$1.25, and a set of eight, \$2.00. Orders should be addressed to Education Division, Link Aviation, Inc., c/o Air Age Education Research, 100 East 42nd Street, New York 17, New York.

*Audio-Visual Guide* for March, 1948, includes an excellent article on equipment entitled, "A Brief Survey of Currently Available Audio Equipment," written by Karl A. Barleben, Technical Editor, *Audio-Visual Guide*. If you are considering the purchase of a recorder or playback, or a combination of the two, you will find it to your advantage to read this analysis.

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# The Educational Scene

The Junior Literary Guild selections for the month of May, 1948, are: for boys and girls 6, 7, and 8 years of age, *Watchdog*, by Laura Bannon, (Albert Whitman), \$2.50; for boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years of age: *Pinto's Journey*, by Wilfrid S. Bronson, (Julian Messner), \$2.50; for older girls, 12 to 16 years of age, *Roommates*, by Laura Cooper Rendina, (Little, Brown), \$2.50; for older boys, 12 to 16 years of age: *The Riddle of the Hidden Pesos*, by Martin Colt, (Julian Messner), \$2.50.

The committee to nominate officers of the National Council of Teachers of English to serve for one year, beginning at the close of the Annual Meeting next November are: Harold A. Anderson, Chairman, Harlen M. Adams, Lou LaBrant, Hol-land D. Roberts, Dora V. Smith. Their nominations, which appear below, may be supplemented by others made by petition of twenty members of the Board of Directors of the Council, accompanied by written consent of the nominees. The Council constitution also provides for nomination from the floor of the Board of Directors when it proceeds

to the election at its last session in connection with the convention of next Thanksgiving. The slate is as follows:

FOR PRESIDENT: Marion C. Sheridan, New Haven High School, New Haven, Connecticut

FOR FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT: Mark Neville, John Burroughs School, St. Louis, Missouri

FOR SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT: Luella B. Cook, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis, Minnesota

FOR SECRETARY - TREASURER: W. Wilbur Hatfield, 211 West 68th Street, Chicago, Illinois

FOR DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (six to be elected)

Joseph Mersand, Long Island City High School, Long Island City, N.Y.

N. P. Tillman, Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia

Constance M. McCullough, San Francisco State College, San Francisco, Calif.

Margaret White, Elementary Supervisor of Language Arts, Cleveland, Ohio

Nellie Appy Murphy, Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pa.

Floyd Stovall, North Texas State Teachers College, Denton, Texas

# Review and Criticism

## Books About Russia

[The brief reviews in this issue are by Helen R. Sattley, Kathryn E. Hodapp, R. Will Burnett, Elizabeth Guilfoile, Frances E. Whitehead, and Hannah M. Lindahl.]

At this time when the two most powerful countries of all the ages are watching each other with suspicion and with fear, it seemed to this reviewer that the only way to review a new informative book on one of those countries, Russia, was to compare and contrast it with similar books already available about that country. To this end, discussions of four books, the new one and three older titles, are herein given.

Irina Aleksander was born in St. Petersburg, where she studied law after the Revolution. She came to America in 1941. Her book is principally a history book, although at the first of it she takes you "through sixteen republics at full speed." But the emphasis is on past history and this is given vividly and well. It reads like a storybook. Sixth graders will read it with ease and high school people will still find it interesting. This history really stops at the Revolution, although there are a few

pages on the Five-Year Plans, of the city built by young people who traveled to the Soviet Far East, four hundred miles from the nearest railroad station in order to build a ship-building port safe from Japanese invasion, and a mention of Russian battles of World War II. But there is really no picture of present day Russia. It is illustrated throughout with decorative black and white pictures, includes one colored double-spread map and brilliant story-telling end-papers. There is no index.

In 1944, J. B. Lippincott published *The Land of the Russian People*, one book in its Portraits of the Nations Series (156 pages, \$2.00). Alexander Nazaroff, the author, was born in Russia, but has been an American citizen for many years. The first half of his book is a picture of the Soviets of today laid against their ancient history. The last half is history down to World War II. This is briefly but well told and the background for the Revolution is clearly pictured as well as what it cost in suffering and in lives. There is men-

<sup>1</sup>Aleksander, Irina, *This Is Russia*. Illustrated by Andrei Hudiakoff. David McKay, 1947, \$3.00, (112 pages).



tion of the place of the church today and as it was immediately after the Revolution; there is a brief summary of the work of the state and the work of the individual in relation to it; and an explanation that though elections are secret only Communists or no-party men whom the Communists approve of may run for office. Speaking of the Communist party, Nazaroff writes, ". . . that party controls all press, literature, and education in the Soviet Union. And it does not allow the expression of views on fundamental political and economic matters of which it disapproves." The book ends on the rapid development of the rich economic resources of the country and on the confidence of the people in their own abilities. There are many fine photographs for illustration and there is an index.

Dorothy Erskine wrote *Russia's Story* (Thomas Y. Crowell, 154 pages, \$2.50) in 1946 after extensive traveling in the Soviet Union. She is an American, wife of a San Francisco attorney. Her book is illustrated with many explanatory graphs and black and white drawings by Bob Smith. The emphasis is on geography and resources, although there are two chapters on history. The Soviets are covered by general descriptions of life in the Arctic, on

the Steppes, in Moscow, and on a farm; and there is one chapter on "Their Government—The Business State." This describes the partnership of people and government, but with these reservations: "With methods of dictatorship as stern as those of Peter the Great, Stalin has modernized Russia," and "The Revolution" has proclaimed and carried out racial equality. It has given countless multitudes education and opportunity to rise. It has provided social security in the modern, industrial age. But as yet there has not been established the freedom of speech, press, and assembly, valued so highly in this country and part of our own Constitution." It is a good reference book with its chapters subdivided into smaller subjects and an index.

Anna Louise Strong went to Russia in 1921 with the American Friends Service. Ever since, she has been working for better relations between the US and the USSR, the country of her husband. Her book, *Peoples of the USSR*, was published in 1944 (Macmillan, 246 pages, illustrated with photographs, \$2.50). A short history of the past leads into separate chapters on the individual Soviets and in each of these later chapters the present is contrasted vividly with the past. There are really three periods, the past, the changes wrought



by the New Russia, and the terrible destruction of the German invasion. Struggle is indeed portrayed throughout the book, but there seems to be almost too much smoothness to the accomplishments of the present Russian government. Too little emphasis is given to the internal struggles of the successful dictatorship; too much amiability is displayed on the part of all the peoples. But this, too, is an important book, for here before us is another picture of a country rich in people and rich in resources and the only lasting bridge between that country and ours will be the bridge of understanding built upon the foundations of knowledge.

Let us know our materials. Let us realize their importance.

—Helen R. Sattley

### ***For Early Adolescents***

*Judith of France.* By Margaret Leighton. Illustrated by Henry C. Pitz. Houghton, \$2.50.

Judith, a granddaughter of Charlemagne, is ever conscious of what her name presages in beauty and woe. She is sworn and determined to prevent internecine warfare. The marriage pawn of her father, she is first wedded to the old Anglo Saxon king; later (and forcibly) to her eldest stepson, and finally to the brave warrior Bras de Fer, foe of the Vikings and protector of the French kingdom.

The book never softens in recounting life in those medieval days: relationships of family and of church and state are all set forth. Judith's devotion to her oath is steadfast and admirable. The illustrations add further to a period no whit lacking in pageantry.

—F.E.W.

*Rue Plays the Game.* By Josephine Blackstock. Putnam, \$2.50.

A naive 18 year old Rue is headed for Chicago and a large Physical Ed. College. To Aunt Laura the emphasis of play directing is on the play. Only an all-A record will legitimize Rue's stay. With settlement work in off-hours, and perpetual twinges of homesickness, the book over-sentimentalizes. Rue too consistently "gets the breaks." The sentimental slant is much too decided and the vocabulary lacks freshness. A combination career, school and love story, this has informational, imaginative and entertainment value, but it is not comparable with the author's earlier *Island on the Beam*.

—F.E.W.

*Rabbits.* By Herbert S. Zim. Illustrated by Joy Buba. Morrow, \$2.00.

Dr. Zim is providing good service to children through his excellent books that provide information as exciting as fairy stories.

*Rabbits* is no Peter Rabbit story.

It is an absorbing, and factual, account of what rabbits are, what they eat, how they build their nests, and how they live. It describes various kinds of rabbits from the tailless "pika" to the common "cotton tail." Its chief interest to children will be in the information it provides on how to keep, feed, and care for rabbits as pets.

The text is simple. The book appears to be poorly illustrated, however, for the age group that would find the material readable and of value. The type and the illustrations appear designed for primary grade youngsters. The writing, both in content and in form, is for children in the upper elementary grades. For such children the book is highly to be recommended. May Dr. Zim give us more like it.

—R.W.B.

*Amik, The Life Story of a Beaver.*

By Luis M. Henderson. Illustrated by the author. Morrow, \$2.50.

*Amik* (Chippewa for beaver) is a naturalist's account of the days of a beaver. Beautifully illustrated by the author, this excellent book is a fascinating chronicle of the childhood and adult activities of a beaver. "What happens to him might well happen to any beaver and through him we shall share in beaver joys and sorrows—."

There is no anthropomorphism in this book. Mr. Henderson fully admits he has "given Amik the power to reason, for he gives every proof of having it." But the account is through the eyes of a trained observer and is presented with a gifted pen. Here is one of the most absorbing children's books the reviewer has seen. The mood of the woods and still ponds is in it. It is a warm and open-hearted book. Its color, drama, and suspense will captivate the junior reader. Its honesty and faithful reporting make the book an important addition to any library for children in which books are selected for their value to the widening horizons of childhood.

—R.W.B.

*Nature Quests and Quizzes.* By Raymond Tiffet Fuller. No illustrations. John Day, \$1.50.

The book is in two parts. The first part consists of one-hundred "quests." Each quest is an exploration in nature to determine, for example, how to find a hummingbird's nest or to watch a skunk family at play and at work. The second part consists of one-hundred nature questions (with the answers printed upside down to keep one from peeking.)

The one hundred field experiences range over a wide variety of possible contacts with nature. About all the

book provides the novice is one hundred ideas of areas to investigate. For example, under the heading "Identifying 25 Wild Flowers" is the following information:

"This is one of the best roads into the land of nature knowledge. An especially good way to start being at home in the world."

Under the heading, "Finding 2 Species of Mole and 1 Shrew," is the following (as in the foregoing, reported in its entirety):

"The shrew is the smallest mammal there is. Too many people think they are moles. Apparently little is known of the habits of both these little mammals."

These two examples are completely typical of the aid the hopeful naturalist can expect in his "quests."

—R.W.B.

*Febold Feboldson; Tall Tales from the Great Plains.* By Paul R. Beath, compiler. Illustrated by Lynn Trank. University of Nebraska Press, \$2.75.

The legendary Swede of the Nebraska plains is the hero of these tall tales. In one episode after another he performs feats which could only have been accomplished in the early days of American expansion. Well told by a student of American language and literature, they lack a continuity of character which might

have been achieved had the compiler set out to write a story of Feboldson rather than collect the various stories about him in their separate units. Boys think the separate stories very funny, though, and this promises to be a popular addition to our folklore collections. Illustrations and format delightful and most appropriate.

—H.R.S.

*Watch for a Tall White Sail.* By Margaret E. Bell. Frontispiece by Louis Darling. William Morrow, \$2.50.

An older girl's novel which can well take its place beside Rose Wilder Lane's *Let the Hurricane Roar*. In portrayal of character and in the picture of the beauty and the cruelty of wilderness country, these books are parallel. When Florence Monroe reluctantly boarded the boat at Victoria, B.C., she had no idea she was following romance to her new home in Alaska. But guiding the tall white sail ahead, as it raced her steamer, was Beldon Craig. Later, his visits were to break the monotony and drudgery of her life at her father's saltery where she went to keep house for her brothers and once, when winter set in too soon, the sight of the white sail was to mean rescue and a safe voyage home. Girls of today will understand and admire this Florence of 1887 who grew to love

the challenge of a pioneer country even while it offered hardships.

—H.R.S.

*The Little White Horse.* By Elizabeth Goudge. Illustrated by Walter Hodges. Coward - McCann, \$2.50.

Many girls of ten to fifteen will revel in the story of Merry Merryweather, who dwelt in a castle in the West Country of England a hundred years ago.

Some there are, the more literal-minded, who will be unable to accept this mixture of fantasy and reality. But the beautiful prose of Elizabeth Goudge has the same bewitching quality in her books for children as in *Green Dolphin Street* and *Pilgrim's Inn*.

The imaginative souls will count the world well lost for a few hours with Merry and her inimitable companions; Sir Wolf, the Lord of Moonacre Manor; Miss Heliotrope, the governess; Old Parson with his fiddle; the dwarf-like cook Marmaduke Scarlet; Zachariah, too wise for a mere cat; and the great dog who all suspect may be a lion.

E. G.

*All Conference Tackle.* By C. Paul Jackson. Crowell, \$2.50.

High school boys, and girls too, will like this story of inter-collegiate football written by a man who knows the game. Mr. Jackson knows people

too. He draws a vivid picture of Larry Shane, who overcomes his greatest obstacle to good team work, Barry Shane. The big freshman from an exclusive eastern prep school learns more than the art of tackling in his first season with Coach Steve Foster's middle western team. He learns that men are men, by right of their own worth and efforts, not by virtue of name, racial background, or inheritance. When he learns this lesson, he really makes good in football.

E. G.

*Dark House on the Moss.* By Constance Savery. Decorations by Clifford N. Geary. Longmans, \$2.50.

Two orphans, Periwinkle and Louis Courtenay, are forced by circumstance to live with an unknown Uncle Morville in the "Dark House on the Moss." Mysterious happenings on the nearby marsh, the apparent hatred of their uncle by his tenants, and a new uninhabited village claim the interest of the children. On the night the marsh breaks loose and entraps the sleeping villagers, Uncle Morville becomes a hero and is vindicated. Nineteenth century English story by the author of *Enemy Brothers* and *The Good Ship Red Lily*. —K.E.H.

*Bittersweet.* By Martha Barnhart Harper. Decorations by Erick Berry. Longmans, \$2.50.

Bitter though sweet after all is the life and romance during Civil war times of Lucy Barnhart and her young minister friend, Nathan Roth, who answers Lincoln's call to arms, though not to return. The commonplace things of everyday living of a large family on a Pennsylvania farm, and the stirring movement of history, are all held together by the story of Lucy who finds her adjustment through helping others. Based on real stories of the author's family.

—K.E.H.

***For the Middle Grades***

*Windy Foot at the County Fair.* By Frances Frost. Illustrated by Lee Townsend. Whittlesey House, \$2.00.

The entire Clark family spends a wonderful week at the County Fair. Toby, the twelve year old, enters his Shetland pony, Windy Foot, in the races. The children have many adventures which include meeting new friends and enemies, winning a coveted doll for Betsy, watching the races through the "dime hole" and the running of the pony race which Toby wins. An interesting part of American life presented by a popular author.

—K.E.H.

***For Younger Children***

*Twelve O'clock Whistle.* By Jerrold Beim and Ernest Crichlow. William Morrow, \$2.00.

One small boy wanted to make autos just like his father, but the day he carried the forgotten lunch pail to the plant he discovered that it takes many men working together to make even one auto. We follow with him the different stages of the assembly line and see the finished cars roll off and we learn with him an important lesson in cooperation. A small picture book in black and white which delights all boys and girls who like mechanical toys and who dream some day of owning "live" ones.

—H.R.S.

*While Susie Sleeps.* By Nina Schneider. Pictures by Dagmar Wilson. William R. Scott, \$1.50.

For the young reader, this book is informative as well as entertaining. The story portrays what happens while Susie sleeps. Insects and little animals crawl and scurry about. Street lights glow. The policeman watches stories and houses; the baker bakes the bread for the next day; the engineer guides the train as it rushes through the night. Milkmen prepare the milk for the morning delivery, and printers print the morning paper. Susie awakens to a world in which important work has been done for her and her family while they slept.

—H.M.L.

*Boppet! Please Stop It!* By Ida Binney. Illustrated by the author. William R. Scott, \$1.50.

A little old lady who lived in a quiet house felt lonely at times. One day she bought a lively, playful puppy named Boppet who changed the quiet, orderly house into a place of noise and confusion. Finally, the little, old lady decided that Boppet needed a child for a playmate. In a home for children, she selected Timothy Toppet who was lively and playful. Timothy Toppet and Boppet romped and played all day long. In fact, they played so hard that by evening they were both ready for bed and slept the whole night through. Once more the little old lady had peace and quiet. Young children will enjoy this rollicking tale.

—H.M.L.

*Spoodles, the Puppy Who Learned.*

By Irma Simonton Black. Pictures by Johnny Whistle. William R. Scott, \$1.25.

Spoodles, who was so named because he looked like both a spaniel and a poodle, was left alone in the house one day when the family went away. The mischief that grew out of his efforts to escape loneliness is dramatically related in story and pictures that will appeal to the very young child.

—H.M.L.

*The Picture Dictionary for Children.*

Revised and newly illustrated by Garnette Watters and S. A. Courtis. Grossett and Dunlop, \$1.25.

This revised edition of a very popular book for children in the primary grades will be welcomed by the countless friends of earlier editions. The expanded vocabulary, the new illustrations, and the extra color on every page are added features of this latest edition. The book is a valuable learning tool for younger children, for through the presentation of words and pictures the child develops correct concepts of unfamiliar words.

—H.M.L.

### Textbooks Received

*New Individual Corrective Exercises for Elementary English.* Book 6.

By Edith H. Price, Flora B. Miller, and Irene Patchen Warner. Illustrated by Betty Thompson. McCormick-Mathers. Pp. 96. List Price 36c, Net Price 27c. Transportation extra.

*Ride Away.* Story Book One. Betts Basic Readers. The Language Arts Series. By Emmett A. Betts and Carolyn M. Welch. Illustrated by Clara Ernst. American Book Co. Pp. 48. \$.48. First Primer.



## ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

*Teachers Guide for Molly, Pete, and Ginger.* By Paul Witty and Esther Phillips. Reading for Interest. D. C. Heath & Company. Pp. 129. \$.60. Pre-Primer.

*Time to Play.* Story Book Two. Betts Basic Readers, The Language Arts Series. By Emmett A. Betts and Carolyn M. Welch. Illustrated by Clara Ernst. The American Book Co. Pp. 63. \$.48. Second Pre-Primer.

*All in a Day.* Story Book Three. Betts Basic Readers, The Language Arts Series. By Emmett A. Betts and Carolyn M. Welch. Illustrated by Clara Ernst. American Book Co. Pp. 72. \$.52. Third Pre-Primer.

*Around Green Hills.* Betts Basic Readers, The Language Arts Series. By Emmett A. Betts and Carolyn M. Welch. Illustrated by Clara Ernst, Walter Howard Knapp, Connie Moran, Marylee Pollock and Nettie Weber. American Book Co. Pp. 192. \$1.36. First Reader.

*Take Off.* Teacher's Edition. Reading Readiness Book—Betts Basic Readers, The Language Arts Series. By Carolyn M. Welch. Illustrated by Clara Ernst. American Book Co. Pp. 48. \$.48.

*Manual for Teaching the Pre-Primer Program.* By David H. Russell and Odille Ousley. Ginn Basic Readers. Ginn and Company. Pp. 287. \$.80. Pre-Primer.

*Molly, Pete and Ginger.* Reading for Interest. By Esther Phillips. Illustrated by Otilie Foy. Educational Consultant, Paul Witty. D. C. Heath and Company. Pp. 69. Pre-Primer.

*Games to Play.* Activities for Reading Readiness. By Grace B. Haynes and David H. Russell. Illustrated by Charlotte Ware. The Ginn Basic Readers. Ginn and Company. Pp. 96. \$.76. Activities for Reading Readiness..

*Manual for Teaching the Primer "The Little White House."* By David H. Russell and Odille Ousley. Assisted by Fay Kirtland. The Ginn Basic Readers. Ginn and Company. Pp. 283. \$.80. Primer.

*My Do and Learn Book.* To Accompany the "Little White House". By Odille Ousley and David H. Russell. Illustrated by Anne Loya. The Ginn Basic Readers. Ginn and Company. Pp. 79. \$.40. Primer.



*Do and Learn. To Accompany Molly, Pete, and Ginger. Reading for Interest.* By Paul Witty and

Esther Phillips. Illustrated by Barbara Casimir. D. C. Heath & Co. Pp. 96. \$.36. Pre-Primer.

### RECENT CHILDREN'S BOOKS

(Continued from Page 297)

as assistant in a settlement house, how she converted Aunt Laura and found the beginning of romance will appeal strongly to the older girl.

*Special Plays for Special Days.* By Mildred Hark and Noel McQueen. Plays, Inc., \$.300.

24 non-royalty plays for young people for all the regular holidays as well as for Health Week, Book Week and Safety Week. Many of the plays have originality and humor. Production notes are included. Not an outstanding collection, but a useful one. For sixth grade and up.

*Watch for a Tall White Sail.* By Margaret E. Bell. Morrow, \$2.50.

Idyllic story of Florence Munroe's sixteenth year which she spent in a remote part of Alaska keeping house for her father and four brothers who were starting a salmon packing business. Her romance with the blond young owner of the swift sailing yacht is charming. All the characters are lifelike, the story is fast moving and on a high ethical plane. Good for girls who are asking for love stories.

### HOW MORAL IS ORAL

(Continued from Page 289)

reporting with carefully prepared oral reading as perhaps a part of it. And notice that we do not, in desperation, propose a completely individual method of teaching reading in which no two individuals will experience the same book together. The conditions for purposeful oral reading can be fulfilled without going to this extreme, and we lose none of the values of group thinking.

Luthur Gilbert's study appears on my bibliography and I am underlining the 1940 from now on. We should be embarrassed, not because we haven't read it but because we failed to take our own boredom as a sign that the old-type oral reading was lulling democracy to sleep. Is your oral reading Gilbert-pure? For the sake of Oswald, Johnny, and Petunia, —and you, too,—I hope so.



ANNOUNCING  
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38th ANNUAL  
CONVENTION

of the  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF  
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at  
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